PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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No. 1277 NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 22, 1922 Price 7 Cents

THE MARKED MOCCASIN;

OR, PANDY ELLIS' PARD.

By AN OLD SCOUT

AND OTHER STORIES

The dusky fiend ignored his bound condition and would have sprung at his throat like a pan[illegible] wild but a sudden and well-directed kick from Rupert stretched him out upon the [illegible]refully ground He bounded to his feet knife in hand

PLUCK AND LUCK

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The Marked Moccasin

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CHAPTER I.—Silver Rifle, the Prairie Sharpshooter.

"Painters an' powderhorns! the man what sez this stranger hyar daren't take his turn at the mark must run agin me, an' they do say as how it was wuss nor tackliin' a hay-cutter ter git in the way o' this hoss. Step right up thar, boyee, an' let any critter dar dispute it. I kin lick ther hull crowd an' a dog under the wagon. You hear me? It's Roarin' Ralph Rockwood what sez it, you bet!"

The scene was a stirring one. Fully fifty men had gathered in the forest to compete for a prize put up by the colonel of the military post, and the reader has become familiar with such a gathering, so that it would be useless in my describing buckskin-clad men who have naught to do with my story. There had been some dissatisfaction expressed because a young man, who was a stranger to all of them, desired to take a turn at the target; but these murmurs had now ceased. Two reasons for this could be given. In the first place, the proclamation of the colonel, which had been posted in a prominent position, declared that anyone who chose could enter the lists and compete for the prize, and as that officer now appeared in sight the grumblers did not wish to cause an investigation, well knowing that they would not come out of it with flying colors.

Then again, Roaring Ralph was a man known to every one of them, and they dared not excite his ire for fear of the result. The old ranger did not seem to be acquainted with the young man whose cause he advocated, but he had seen him before, and knowing something of his marvelous shooting qualities, desired a chance to witness the astonishment of the gathered soldiers and bordermen. Besides, he was a lover of fair play, and knew that by the rules the desired marksman was entitled to his shot.

There was another motive, too, as might be gleaned from the few words which the veteran ranger uttered to himself:

"Tar heels an' turpentine! wonder if the gal are anywhars around. I'd like ter lay my ole peeper on her beautiful face again. How kin I do it? Ha! throw my scalp ter a Pawnee dog ef I ain't got ther game right in my hands. Soup-bones an' sauerkraut, thar's Reckless Rupert; I'll wait till it comes down to a fine point, and then get him ter try his fancy shot, for thar's nothin' like strategy in all these things," with which comfortable reflection the veteran trapper lapsed into silence.

He chanced to be watching the young stranger when the colonel drew near, and was surprised to see him give a start, and pull his broad-brimmed hat still lower, so that it would be impossible to distinguish his face. This significant action told the shrewd ranger that these two had met before, and that the younger man did not desire recognition. The presence of the colonel was the signal for the beginning of the sport, and presently every one who had entered the lists had taken a shot at the target, and one-third of the number found themselves debarred from further attempts. A second round was shot at a more difficult target, and fully one-half of the remainder found that their chances were cut short. The young stranger, who had simply given his name as Silver Rifle, had fired both of these times with a nonchalance and dead certainty that proclaimed his utter contempt for such target practice, and his action had not failed to catch the eye of the champion shot of the past, he who had been designated as Reckless Rupert.

The match had really been gotten up to try conclusions between him and a sergeant who had lately come to the post, and whose reputation as a marksman had preceded him, for no one suspected for an instant that a rival would appear for the champion in any one else. Astonishment was, therefore, rife when the sergeant missed the now difficult mark, and the contest was now limited to these two. The colonel, disappointed and chagrinned at the failure of his man to acquit himself creditably, now took a new and feverish interest in this new opponent of Reckless Rupert's. He leaned forward and scanned him eagerly from head to foot as if forcibly reminded of some one, and then shook his head sternly as though he would not allow such ideas to remain in his brain. Meanwhile the sports went on.

Reckless Rupert was rather pleased than otherwise to discover that he had met a foeman worthy of his steel, and every device that an ingenious brain and a keen marksman could devise was brought to bear upon the matter. He soon began to realize that he had met his match, for not only were his shots copied to the minutest detail, but in many instances improved upon. For once Reckless Rupert was in despair; but at this moment a few words from Roaring Ralph caused his face to brighten. Carefully he loaded his rifle, while the old ranger, picking up a wild gourd, walked away toward the east, carefully

measured his paces until the required distance was passed over. Then he turned and held out the gourd, which was the size of an orange, by the slender neck. A dead silence came upon the assembly. Like a statue Reckless Rupert stood, with his cheek pressed against the stock of his rifle. Then came the sharp report, and those who were watching intently saw the gourd fly into pieces, while the neck, several inches long, remained in the hands of the old imperturbable ranger.

"Ef thet don't bring her out, then I reckon nothin' will," muttered the Coloradan, as he gathered the pieces of the gourd and brought them to the crowd for examination.

The gourd had burst into about half a dozen large pieces, and these upon being placed together showed the little bluish hole made by the rifle ball. Rupert stood by, a smile of conscious pride upon his tanned face. Roaring Ralph was watching the unknown sharpshooter out of the corner of eye. He saw him hesitate, and then walk quickly forward to the spot where he himself had stood while holding the gourd. Then placing a whistle to his mouth he blew several sharp notes upon it, waited a few minutes and repeated the signal, which it undoubtedly was. Every eye was fastened upon him in wonder, all but Roaring Ralph, who knew what was about to happen, though he was none the less interested on this account. While they watched, there suddenly appeared among the trees a gliding figure which approached the young marksman. It was a girl, dressed in the most picturesque border style, her long hair falling down below her waist, and the fawn skin garments, trimmed with beads and quills, showing off a form that Venus might have envied. Putting into her hand a round gourd not over half the size of the one Reckless Rupert had broken, he uttered a few words in a low tone, and then walked toward the others as if carefully measuring the distance. Then he wheeled about. Something like an inarticulate cry came from the throng as they saw the girl place the gourd upon her fair head and stand there like a statue. All eyes followed the motions of the young man as he raised his rifle.

"Stop!" said a voice, hoarse with rage and something else besides, "this is madness. Would you let him imperil the life of that fair creature? In the name of humanity, stop him, and he is welcome to the prize."

It was Reckless Rupert who gave vent to these words, and his face was aflame with various emotions. His eyes were glued upon the form of the young girl, and it was plain to all that this was not the first time he had seen her, for her presence under such peculiar circumstances affected him strangely. Silver Rifle turned and gave him a scrutinizing glance, and then looked toward Roaring Ralph, who stepped forward ready to champion the young sharpshooter through. With his usual characteristic address, the old Colorado ranger announced his perfect willingness to "everlastingly chaw to shark's meat" the man that dared oppose the venture of his protege, and showed such a cheerfulness in making the statement that there was no taker.

Again Silver Rifle bent his head: the weapon became as steady as a rock, and after a brief pause, during which one could almost have heard the beating of his heart, the report sounded.

"Missed, by thunder!" cried those who had looked up in the air to see the pieces fly as they had done when Reckless Rupert fired, but as they dropped their eyes to the head of the fair girl it was discovered that the small gourd was gone.

One of the men ran out and returned with the gourd, which had two holes in it, so close to the center that the target had not broken. This he was about to show to the colonel, when the girl, for the first time, turned her face towards them. The officer uttered a loud cry.

"My soul! it is Dolly!"

Then turning he pointed to Silver Rifle.

"Seize that man! Fifty dollars to the one who lays him by the heels! Quick, or he will escape!" he thundered out.

The prairie sharpshooter dashed away, but a dozen would have been in pursuit had not Roaring Ralph sprang to the front and faced them, knife in hand, his bearded face flushed with fury.

"Dust my Sunday breeches, if I don't clean cut the hull kit o' ye yet. Silver Rifle kim hyar at my invitation, an' he shall go clar. Whatever grudge ther kernal may hev agin him must keep. Now they're gone. Kernal, what do ye know o' that gal?"

"Know of her!" almost gasped the enraged officer; "confound your impudence, Rockwood, that girl is my daughter, Dolly! As to the young man, he is one who has sworn war to the knife against me, and who will yet feel the weight of my anger."

CHAPTER II.—To the Death.

"Greaser, yer a cheat and a swindle!"

As the words were spoken, the man giving utterance to them sprang to his feet, and with remarkable agility swept the gold from the table into his pocket. Astonishment had held his opponent mute for the moment, but he, too, sprang to his feet, uttering loud exclamations. Drawing a knife, he would have sprung at the hunter had not the buckskin-clad worthy covered him with a revolver. Lowering glances were cast upon him from many of the inmates of the den, but he seemed as cool as a cucumber.

"I've been in jest this same position afore now, an' don't keer a continental how soon ye begin operations. Thar'll be some hefty work for the coroner, I reckon, afore we're done. Is thar a man hyar what knows me?"

"I do," came a voice at this instant, and all eyes were turned toward the speaker, a squatty man, dressed in buckskin and wearing a huge felt hat. "I have cause to remember you. Gentlemen, take a look at my classical head. You will be pleased to notice that I am minus a fine pair of ears. That I owe to him."

As the stumpy hunter spoke, he removed his broad-brimmed felt hat, and swept back the mass of dark hair that was allowed to cover his neck. Sure enough, his ears were gone. The act also showed his face to be considerably slashed with old knife wounds. The old ranger laughed as if tickled at the sight of the earless man.

"Yas, I sliced 'em off fur ye, Yaller Bob. Thet war afore ye gained yer present notoriety, an' when we cort ye stealin' our pelts up on ther Big Horn. Glad ter meet ye agin. Can't ye stir up a circus fur me hyar? Ther wolf blood hez been lyin' quiet in me so long that I'm afraid they'll think I'm under the daisies along ther border ef I don't kick up a rumpus soon."

This dare-devil request rather staggered all who heard it, and the squatty, buckskin-clad ranger glared around him as though too full of rage to answer.

"You will have enough of it to keep you awake, my fire-eater, for if I can help it you will never leave here alive. Gentlemen," he continued, turning to the crowd, "allow me to introduce to you a man who has been the bane of the border among our class for twenty years past, and agin whom I have a dead-grudge—Pandy Ellis!"

As the name of the noted Indian fighter fell upon the ears of those assembled in the Deadwood gambling den, it was amazing to see how they shrank from him, as they would from one who had the smallpox. It rather tickled the old man to see that he was not quite forgotten in the neighborhood, and bending down a trifle he drew a fifteen-inch bowie-knife from the back of his neck.

"Now I'm ready ter sail in. Give ther word, Yaller Bob, an' see how soon I kin clean ther ranch out. Down in Santa Fe, ye 'member, I laid ten men on ther floor, an' I'd like ter keep up my reputation in this region. Yaller Bob, why don't yer sail sail in?"

At this instant a tall form sprang through the open door and alighted at the side of the old ranger, who turned like a flash, ready to use either bowie or revolver; but a light flashed over his face as he recognized in the tall, handsome ranger one whom he had not seen for many months, and whom he little expected to come across in Deadwood.

"Blue Bill," he exclaimed.

"You bet—and ready to help in the good work of cleaning out this den!" And the tall ranger also brought a revolver into view.

There was something of a sensation at the mention of this name, for it was not unknown among the men assembled there.

"Proceed with ther show, Yaller Bob—that's a good feller," insinuated old Pandy.

"To oblige you, I will. Comrades, be ready to sail in, and the man that drives his knife into the heart of Pandy Ellis gets my bonanza claim."

As Yellow Bob spoke, he suddenly turned a screw close at hand—a contrivance of the bartender's—and all the lights in the place were extinguished at once. This was a neat little contrivance on the part of the proprietor, whereby he might escape should his life ever be threatened. No sooner had darkness come upon the scene than the most tremendous uproar ensued. Loud oaths and cries rent the air, accompanied by a smashing sound of glass. Indeed, it seemed for a time as though Bedlam had been let loose, but not a pistol shot was heard. Pandy Ellis and his comrade stood close to where they had been when the lights went out, ready to engage in a desperate hand-to-hand struggle for life, but as the racket gradually grew less in volume, what seemed to be the truth broke in upon their minds. It was so simply ridiculous that they had to laugh outright. All of the ruffians had skulked away.

By this time the noise had ceased entirely, and all that could be heard was a series of most melancholy grunts and whispered curses from one of the windows. Old Pandy struck a match and applied it to one of the lamps in the place, which immediately gave them the benefit of its light. There, stuck fast in one of the windows, was the redoubtable Yellow Bob. He had evidently been crawling out backward when the heavy sash fell across his back, pinning him there. Some one who had been pulling at his lower extremities outside, ran off as soon as the light appeared. The two hunters laughed loud and long at the ludicrous situation of the rascal, and then Blue Bill, with an eye to business, swept what loose change that remained upon the various tables into his pocket, to reimburse them for their trouble, after which the two rangers left the place. It was some ten minutes later, while Yellow Bob was making a solemn oath to be the death of both of them, that Pandy Ellis and Blue Bill stood face to face in a lone cabin on the outskirts of the town.

"Then you are on the trail?" asked Bill.

"I have started on it, an' will foller ter ther death. There's stirring times ahead, Billy," returned Pandy.

"Right you are, and I'm with you, old man. Here's to the death."

The parties shook hands, and the compact was sealed.

CHAPTER III.—Wolf-Blood.

The far northwest. Glorious old Sol was just hanging in the west like a ball of fire, and evening was close at hand, when two men broke through the bushes that bordered a clear stream of water and stood upon the sloping bank. There they stood, leaning upon their rifles, and looking around upon the peaceful scene. What mission had brought these two stern men so far away from all points of civilization? This will be speedily made manifest. After a cursory glance around them, the two sat down upon an old log that was moss-covered. Vegetation grew in luxuriance around, but there was none of that superabundance found in the equatorial forest that impedes travel while it presents a charming picture. This was not the season for trapping, and the redskins were reported unusually fierce, so that their object must be indeed a strange one to bring them to this part of the country.

"Up to this time, old hoss, you have put off telling me the full particulars of the case, and now, while we sit here, I want you to relate the whole story. I am with you, first, last, and all the time, as you may understand by my coming to this wild part of the country." And Blue Bill drew out his pipe, charged it, and began puffing away as though taking it easy.

Pandy Ellis remained silent for perhaps a full minute, gazing at vacancy, as though his thoughts were far away. A troubled look came upon his face at the same time, and he winked rapidly, as if striving to keep back any womanly symptoms of sorrow.

"'Tain't a very pleasant subject ter think about, Billy, but I hev in part grown used ter it, an' will tell yer ther story jest as I know it. What thar air missin' yer imagination must supply.

"Bolly and I had separated, fur I had some business down in Mexico, while Bolly wanted to see some friends in Arkansas. It war several months afore I managed ter reach Little Rock, an' ye may well imagine ther news I heard liked ter hev killed me outright. Bolly had once hed a brother, which he thought were dead. Many a time hez he told me o' ther lively times they hed together as boyees.

"It seems thet he had been looked on as dead fur years back; so when a half-drunken galoot run agin him in Little Rock in the dark, he knocked him down. I never could understand jest how it war; all I knew is thet they hed a regular duel on ther spot wid some friends on each side.

"Bolly was jest rekivering from a sick spell, an' I reckon his hand warn't as steady as it might a-been. His man fell, but got up agin. Bolly lay thar, shot through ther heart."

The old ranger bowed his head in his hands for a few minutes as though the story was too much for him, and Blue Bill could see his gaunt frame trembling with emotion. Presently he looked up again, but there was a strained expression on his thin face, and a fierce glitter in the eyes that had made many a border scoundrel tremble to see.

"I heerd it all through Ned Prince. Thar war a time when I didn't like Ned, 'cause I thort he war ther kind o' a critter ter stab a man in ther back; but when I heerd how he keered fur my pore pard, Bolly Wherrit, I shook his hand, an' swore I hed wronged him. I seen him cringe like, but never cud tell why he did it.

"Ter proceed with ther sad story.

"Ned took Bolly off an' hed him buried, while Jack Wherrit skipped the town. From some I heerd that he war terribly worked up when he found thet he hed killed his brother, but run fur fear some o' ther boyees would take vengeance on him, ther cowardly brute.

"I would ter Heaven I hed happened inter Little Rock about thet time; thar'd been a terrible time, fur I'd hev cut ther drunken coward's weasand out. I've been on his trail ever since, an' I'll foller him ter ther end o' ther world onless death steps in an' takes a lead. When I find him—the slayer o' my pard—then woe ter him. Blue Bill, woe ter him!"

The old ranger's voice trembled with rage, and Blue Bill knew that when the end came, and he face to face with Jack Wherrit, the reckoning would be terrible indeed.

"Ther trail hez been plain ter men, fer ther man hez ther family mark o' the Wherrits—his left feet air crooked, an' everywhar ye kin tell him by ther moccasin track. I've known Bolly war near often, when accordin' ter my calculations he should hev been far away, jest acause I kim acrost that marked moccasin.

"'Tain't like an ordinary trail, fur ther fellow can't change it ter save his life. Ther family mark were not quite so strong in Bolly, but it hez had much ter do wid his life. Twice, ter my knowledge, he came near going under, 'cause some critters what had a grudge agin him follered ther trail o' ther marked moccasin.

"Then agin it hez done him several good turns. Thar war one in particular thet comes ter my mind. Bolly war in a bad fix. He had run agin Yaller Bob—the very critter we hed ther disturance with at Deadwood—an' his gang o' sweet angels, an' after flustratin' three of 'em, ther boyee found himself a prisoner. They hated Bolly like bloody pizen, an' it took 'em quite a while ter hitch up an idea by which he should shuffle off this mortal coil, as ther feller sez.

"They hit it at last.

"Now, I've known Bolly ter be in quite a number o' unpleasant perdickyments. Thar war, fur instance, the time when he fell inter ther hands o' ther Hudson Bay trappers arter tumblin under ther queer ole mound whar the Blackfeet buried their dead centuries ago. They tied him ter a log an' set him afloat that time, an' a pesky affair he had o' it when ther ole log tried ter turn.

"Then agin I 'member down in Mexico somewhar, Bolly shut himself in a cabin wid four human devils an' fit it out. Now, that warn't much fer an ole codger like me ter do—I've been shut up with a score an' left half o' 'em lyin' thar dead—but I thort it too reckless in ther boyee, fut he never war sich a devil in a fight as ther ole man when he gits on ther rampage.

"I could tell ye o' a half dozen more cases whar Bolly found himself bad off, but none of 'em would ekal this un.

"Them critters had fastened him ter a powder keg, lighted the fuse, and left him ter watch death creepin' toward him in the fire. Why, it makes me shudder jest ter think o' it.

"I run agin that marked moccasin trail, an' kim in sight jest at ther critical moment, but I hed no hand in savin' ther lad from ther powder; he did thet himself.

"Jest afore they left him, he coolly begged, as a last favor, thet Yaller Bob give him a good chaw o' 'bacca, an' ther critter, suspectin' nothin', done it. When they war out o' sight, what did Bolly do but salivate ther powder o' ther train, so thet when ther fire kim along it war extinguished at this wet place.

"I found him sittin' thar, chewin' away as contentedly as a cow at her cud. Jest as I released the lad the pesky outlaws kim up, wonderin' why they hadn't heerd no explosion. We had quite a tussle with 'em, and Bolly fit like a king. Ah, me, ter think ther lad'll never stand side by side with me agin. It's enough ter make one shed tears o' blood! You an' me make a team, Blue Bill, but ye could never be to me what my ole pard war. Fur nigh on ter forty years we hev clung ter each other, an' it do seem as though Pandy Ellis war now an old trunk with ther limbs chopped off. My curse on Jack Wharrit!"

From behind the log, further on, a man's face arose. His eyes were fastened upon the old ranger, and he seemed fascinated by the emotion of Pandy Ellis. Now and then a shudder passed over his frame, but he lay there among the trailing vines, motionless, until Blue Bill sprang to his feet with an exclamation.

"Look! here's the very trail we lost at noon. Fortune has brought us to it again. There can

be no mistaking that footprint. The wretch has been here, has even sat upon this log!"

Pandy Ellis sprang erect.

"My soul, I'm lost!" was the thought of the hidden man, as he drew back his head and flattened himself out still more against the log.

"Yes, he's been hyar; that's ther mark o' ther pizen sarpint—ther wretch thet made ole Pandy Ellis wuss nor a widower. Would ter Heaven we hed come sooner! His time air drawin' near, an' may my arm wither if it means me when ther hour comes ter avenge Bolly's death! Oh, I could tear ther devil limb from limb, an' hurl him inter the gates o' hell piecemeal! Would that ther war tortures ekal to a thousand deaths, ther murderer o' my pard should feel 'em all!"

"Come, old man, you are exciting yourself too much. This wolf-blood in you must find an outlet soon, or you'll have one of your crazy spells. Let us hunt a camp down the river, and in the morning follow this trail here—to death!"

"Yes, to death!" muttered the old ranger, arising and walking after his comrade.

Ah, if he had but known that it was the presence of the reptile they sought that made him so restless, he might have found a vent for the savage wolf-blood. When the forms of the two trappers had been lost among the trees and gathering twilight, the craven, Jack Wherrit, crept out of his place of concealment, and with a white, set face skulked away, trembling and yet desperate as a wolf at bay.

CHAPTER IV.—The Specter Canoe.

The spot where the two hunters pitched their camp was one quite different from that which they had recently left. They were in the mouth of a ravine, and while the river could still be seen in front, back of them lay a dense thicket, and on either side was the giant forest trees. Night had come, with all the accompanying noises. The stars looked down from the blue heavens, but it would be some time before the moon put in an appearance. Blue Bill had started a small fire, which was almost invisible twenty feet away, as it was built in a hole dug in the ground. Over this the handsome ranger was cooking some venison, while Pandy lay near by watching the operation with half-closed eyes, a trick of the veteran trapper. When the meat was ready, they plunged in without further ceremony. There may be something in the grace said at some tables, but with many it becomes a mere form. The truest way of showing thankfulness is to prove it by fully enjoying whatever is set before us.

Supper over, the two men allowed the fire to go out, and settled themselves for a smoke. Knowing that they were in a dangerous country, where the Blackfeet were generally found as thick as bees in a hollow tree, they puffed their smoke in almost complete silence, exchanging only a few sentences occasionally, and these in a lone tone. Finally Pandy proposed sleep, and to this Blue Bill readily acquiesced, for they had tramped many miles during the day just spent, and Pandy was ready to acknowledge that when it came to a tramp he was not the man he used to be in his younger days. They had already made rude couches of leaves and hemlock branches, and upon such beds they had passed many a night in slumber, so that these were deemed comfortable resting places.

The night passed on. Jupiter led his hosts across the blue firmament, in the ceaseless march of time. Almost overhead the god of war, fiery Mars, glowered down like an eye of evil upon the slumbering earth. Strange noises came from the forest, near and far, but the howling of wolves and cries of various nocturnal birds and beasts would have been music in the ears of a backswoodsman. In the east the moon arose, looking like a Chinese shield of silver hung in the heavens, and in places where her light found an ingress between the tall trees that lined the river bank, it trembled softly upon the water. It could not have been very far from midnight when old Pandy Ellis raised his head from the ground and held it in a listening attitude. From long service in the backwoods his ears had become acute to a marvelous degree, and on many an occasion he had proven this. The sound that reached him was the light dip of a paddle upon the water, but it must have been something of more power than this that had waked him up.

Gaining his feet he laid a hand on the arm of Blue Bill, who responded to the touch almost instantly. The two men then crept down the ravine to the river, which was speedily spread out before them. At this point the stream was about twelve or fifteen yards across from bank to bank, and just even with them the moon lit up its surface for a stretch of half a score of feet. Closer comes the sound of the paddle, and it was evident that the canoe was near at hand. Both men gripped their rifles nervously, for thoughts had entered their minds that it might prove to be the man they sought, and the eyes of old Pandy seemed to flash fire at the idea. In imagination Pandy was once more kneeling upon the lonely grave of his old pard, renewing the oath of vengeance; and was it necessary to chase the murderer over the whole world, he and Blue Bill would do it, so that in the end Bolly's death was avenged. Closer came the mysterious bark. There was a singular regularity in the strokes that fell upon old Pandy's ears as unnatural. The person who used the paddle must be an adept, indeed, to wield it with such precision.

"Thar it is!" said Blue Bill.

Looking up the stream, the two men could see the shadowy outlines of a boat, with a human figure standing erect in it. The vessel was speeding down the river with lightning rapidity, and even while they watched, it reached the edge of the illumined spot and shot into view. The occupant of this spectral craft was a man, dressed in trapper costume; and, as his hat was off, they could see his long white hair streaming down upon his shoulders. Only for a few seconds did the white bark canoe remain in sight, and then both the vessel and its occupant were lost to view in the semi-gloom beyond. Pandy Ellis caught Blue Bill's arm in a grip of steel, and his voice was husky, as he said:

"Did ye see him, Billy? Heaven help me! That war the specrit o' my pard, on whose grave I swore that terrible oath. Ther ghost o' Bolly Wherrit cries aloud for vengeance!"

CHAPTER V.—On the War-Path.

Both Pandy Ellis and Blue Bill remained motionless for a full minute after the phantom canoe and its ghastly occupant had disappeared. The words of the old ranger added to the strangeness of the spell that bound them. Finally Blue Bill raised his hand and dashed it across his face. Of the two, perhaps, he had the least touch of superstition in his nature; or it might be that Bolly Wherrit's death did not seem so real to him, through mere hearsay, as to the old veteran who had knelt upon the grave of his chum away down near Little Rock. At any rate, Blue Bill fancied there must be something wrong, and his action in throwing up his hand was to ascertain whether or no he was dreaming. Upon being reassured as to his state of wakefulness, he turned upon his companion:

"I am puzzled, old man. If I didn't understand that he was dead, I'd surely say we had seen your old pard. You are quite positive that Bolly went under?" he asked.

A grim smile appeared on Pandy's thin face. "I tell ye, Billy, my oath war taken on his grave. Ned Price told me ther whole yarn, an' took me ter whar he had buried ther ole man. No, thar ain't ther least doubt in my mind but what we hev seen ther ghost o' my pard. They say murdered men's spirits haunt ther man what sent them outer ther world, an' I reckon poor Bolly can't rest easy till reterbution overtakes Jack. He looked as natural as life, did Bolly. Come, let us go back ter our camp, Billy; this thing hez upset me completely."

Truth to tell, the old ranger's hand was trembling as it had never been known to do in the face of the greatest danger. Feeling that the dead had visited him, perhaps to urge the pursuit of Jack Wherrit more keenly, he was worked up to a tremendous pitch of excitement. They sat upon their couches for some time, and talked the matter over. Pandy finally convinced Blue Bill as to the truth of his assertion, and he was just as firm a believer as the veteran in the existence of a disembodied spirit. That they had looked upon the specter of murdered Bolly Wherrit neither of them doubted in the least. Blue Bill finally lay down and passed into the Land of Nod, but old Pandy started up his pipe and lay there reflecting on the marvelous spectable upon which his eyes had rested. Believing, as he did, that he had been the recipient of a visit from the dead, the old man grew very solemn while thinking of the past. Without the comrade who had been at his side in almost every difficulty in which he had been engaged, the future looked black indeed, and the old ranger dared not spend much time in contemplation of it. The past had more charms for him, and in thinking of it Pandy felt the tears crowding his eyes. He looked sharply at Blue Bill as if ashamed lest his emotion should be seen, but the dashing ranger was fast locked in the arms of Morpheus. That midnight vigil was never forgotten by old Pandy, for the full tide of his loss came rushing upon him, and he bowed his head in grief.

Gradually, however, the pain passed away, and he calmly looked to the future. He was an old man, already past the time allotted to human beings, and through all his life he had been almost miraculously saved from scores of dangers when all hope seemed gone. Perhaps his time was near at hand, and Heaven had taken this means of warning him. Well, let the grim monster come; he had faced him too often to fear him now. He had ever raised his hand in defense of right and the weak against wrong, and his brave soul would meet the Master of Life with not a stain upon it other than those which will assail even the best of men. His cogitations were interrupted. The conviction suddenly came upon the old trapper that there was something moving upon the band of the ravine, for his ears had not been hurt by age, and were as keen as ever. Instantly Pandy was on the alert. He turned his gaze upward, while his hand, almost unconsciously, as it were, reached out and grasped his trusty rifle. A bush rustled, and immediately his eyes were glued upon it. The moon had made its appearance above the bank, and this very bush reached to its lower edge, so that if aught appeared above the twigs, it must be plainly outlined against the silver disk that hung in the blue spy.

Ha! no wonder the old trapper started and clutched his rifle more firmly. There arose from behind the bush the feathered head of a Blackfoot brave. His ebon hair hung in straggly masses from his scalp, and was profusely decorated with feathers and such gaudy embellishments. As the moon was behind him his face was not outlined, but it was easy enough to picture it ,glaring with rage and triumph, the eyes fastened upon the two trappers below; for as the moon had now gained quite a high altitude, her rays fell upon both of them. Pandy remained as motionless as a statue, his eyes glued upon the silhouette of the redman, as placed against the bright face of the moon. Thus for a few minutes matters remained stationary. Then the Indian's arms were slowly elevated, part of a bow came into sight, and it could be seen that he had already fitted an arrow to the string. His eyes were fastened upon the form of Blue Bill, probably because the dashing ranger lay in a little more prominent position. Did he intend firing?

There could hardly be a question in relation to this fact, for the Blackfoot was evidently not the man to go through such maneuvers for nothing. Probably the two rangers had been observed as they made their way through the woods, and followed to their camp in the ravine, after which the spy—perhaps this brave himself, seeing that he was so eager to have the first blow—had made his way to where his comrades could be found, and led them to the scene of action. There were others close by; the old trapper could hear the bushes rattling above him on the other side of the ravine, and knew the warrior with the bow was not alone. One great wave of excitement seemed to surge through his frame, and then he was as cool as ever before in his life. The wolf-blood had leaped in rejoicing at the prospect of an immediate and severe conflict, but he had quieted it.

The redskin evidently thought that by virtue of his discovery he had a right to demolish one of the daring palefaces, and it was no doubt fully arranged that when the death-cry of the

stricken ranger burst upon the midnight air, the other Indians should throw themselves upon the remaining white, and either capture or make away with him. Quite a neat plan, indeed, but it was fated to fail at the very start. Knowing that he, too, was in full view of the Indian, and perhaps, several others besides, Pandy gave up the idea of raising his gun. He was an expert at firing offhand, and could do just as much execution without giving them the slightest warning of his intentions. Slowly the Indian raised his bow until it had been brought into the proper position; at the same time Pandy was elevating his gun by degrees until he was sure that it was bearing directly upon the painted devil behind the bush. There was no time to lose. When the Indian had gained his desired position he would give a quick, spasmodic jerk, and the arrow would be sent forward with force enough to go through a buffalo.

Authors speak of an Indian slowly drawing the arrow back to the head, holding it there for a few seconds, as if to aim, and then letting drive; but this is all sheer nonsense. No one ever saw an Indian send an arrow thus. They aim by guessword, and gain a double amount of force by throwing the whole body forward with the shot; the whole work is done in an instant of time. No man knew this better than Pandy, and, therefore, he got himself in readiness, so as to be able to defeat any such move on the part of the redskin. Keenly he watched the fellow's every move, and when the final instant arrived, the old trapper's finger pressed the trigger of his rifle. There followed the sharp, stunning report. Close upon its heels came a horrible shriek of human anguish. The Indian's bow and arrow were thrown high up in the air, and as for the ill-fated brave himself, he made a spasmodic leap, and came thudding down into the ravine, tearing away the vines and bushes in his death-plunge. Old Pandy was on his feet in an instant, and although Blue Bill had been aroused from a deep sleep, he was not many seconds behind the veteran. He seemed to comprehend the whole matter in a flash, for the Indian yell put him into possession of the facts.

He rolled over several times almost in a twinkling, grasped his gun, leaped to his feet, and gained the side of his companion. They had quite a hot time before them, but neither man thought of shirking the encounter even for an instant. For all they knew there might be fifty of the red fiends, but it was their desire to close with them first, and only retreat in case of overwhelming numbers. Both men had immediately leaped from the moonlight into the dense shadow that lined the eastern side of the ravine. It was well they did so, for in another moment they would have been the targets for many savage marksmen. As it was, upon turning around after gaining the shelter of the shade, Blue Bill saw three long arrows quivering in the ground at the very point where he had lain, and realized that he had not been an instant too soon in rolling away from the spot. The two men crouched down and waited for what was sure to follow. Blue Bill had drawn his rifle up close to his shoulder, and was only watching for an opportunity to use it, while Pandy held a seven-shooter in his hand. All this had taken place in a few seconds of time, and then came the result. There was a crackling of bushes and a dozen dusky forms came plunging into the ravine like so many wolves in search of quarry. Blue Bill's rifle sounded the death-knell of one brave, and old Pandy's revolver commenced its quick but terrible work. Then the Blackfeet sprang madly upon them, and the fight became a hand-to-hand one, which each one strove with the power of a Hercules for supremacy, and where grim Death hovered with his skeleton hand upraised to clutch all who might fall into his power.

CHAPTER VI.—The Mysterious Hunter.

The moon was shining from a clear sky, and a broad stretch of prairie land, illumined by her silvery light, lay like a sea of glory, the gentle night wind now and then disturbing the grass, and making it undulate here and there like the billows of the ocean. It was a glorious spectacle, and not a thing seemed to man the serenity of the scene; but stay, from out the timber line dashed a horse, upon whose back sat a man dressed in buckskin. In his hand this hunter grasped a long, deadly rifle; his face could not be seen, as the broad sombrero shaded it from view; but his long white hair streamed out behind him as he dashed madly along. Occasionally he turned in his saddle and looked behind him as though pursued, and that that was the case was speedily made manifest.

When he had ridden about a hundred yards there burst out of the timber, with a series of shrill yells, a score of mounted Indians, who urged their horses with every conceivable method after the hunter. The moonlight chase had evidently continued for quite a time, and the horse of the white-haired hunter must have been fatigued when it began, for he showed many signs of weariness now, while the animals of the red men were for the most part fresh. Away dashed the man riders. Turning in his saddle the white-haired hunter aimed his rifle. Probably the Indians already knew what execution he could do, for they seemed to fear him, as every warrior flattened himself out upon the back of his steed. Crack! The hunter knew a trick worth two of theirs, and as the report if his gun rang out, one of the mustangs received the fatal lead, plunged forward, and threw his unsuspecting rider fully twenty feet away. Whether injured by the shock or not, the brave was most effectually counted out from the struggle that was bound to take place. Once more the Indians arose and urged their wiry steeds onward. Their gain was very evident, and one could almost decide upon the time it would take for the end of the race to come.

The mysterious hunter's horse fairly staggered, and yet with a determined nature, which only a man who has had such a noble animal can understand, he used every effort to keep up the race. Finally a volley of shots broke from the pursuers, and the arrows and bullets hurtled around the mad rider. One, by accident, struck his horse's leg, and the animal came to a sudden halt, so that it was with difficulty the man kept himself from falling. Understanding exactly what was the matter, the white man leaped to the

ground. Hardly had he done so than his steed, with a piteous moan, plunged forward and fell lifeless to the grass. A savage shout rang out from the redskins when this fact became apparent, and they urged their horses forward as if anxious to reach the man at bay; but it was wonderful to note how quickly this determination was changed when the white-haired ranger raised his long rifle. Every Indian sank behind his horse and they seemed to wheel to the left, although the horses were still going forward at a mad pace.

"Dash my moccasins, if they ain't got the Comanche trick. Waal, that's wuth comin' so far north ter see, I swar. Whoever heard o' Blackfeet tryin' thet dodge afore? They don't quite git the hang o' it; I reckon I could do better myself without practice. I'll let 'em understand thet amateurs can't come thet game on this chicken."

About this time there was formed a complete circle around the mysterious ranger that continually moved in the same direction, and as the arrows and bullets began to cut the air around him, the white-haired hunter realized that unless he wished to fall a victim to a chance missile, he had better drop behind the body of his dead horse. This he proceeded to do, and from his place of concealment watched the maneuvers of the enemy, showing more surprise and interest in regard to their actions than fear of the result, which proved beyond a doubt that the strange man cared not a cent for his life. Gradually the living circle around him was contracting, and whoever had taught the Blackfeet this trick of their Texan brothers must have instructed them in all particulars, for they understood what was expected of them. Sooner or later the end must come.

This would probably arrive when his rifle was empty, so that by firing it he would bring matters to a crisis. Deliberately singling out a certain one of his enemies who was foolhardy or ignorant enough to expose himself more than his fellows, the hunter threw up his rifle and took a quick aim. The report came so speedily that one could almost imagine it to be a snap-shot. There was a terrific yell, and the brawny warrior, his foot caught in a loop of rope that had been used for some purpose, was carried away at the heels of his mustang. As the hunter had suspected, this was the signal for an assault. His rifle was now empty, and he would have no time to reload it, so he threw the weapon into a clump of tall grass, where the Indians would not be likely to find it, and at some future time he might expect to recover it. True enough, the Indians turned their horses toward the center of the circle, and urged them madly forward. They no longer tried to conceal themselves behind their steeds, only bending low as they urged the animals forward. What followed was one of the strangest scenes of border adventure on record.

Naturally, one of the Indians reached the point of action in advance of his fellows, and, drawing in his mustang, bent over to send an arrow through the form of the crouching trapper. It was a fatal action for him. As if charged with electricity, the form of the mysterious hunter sprang erect. As he did so his revolver was discharged, and the Indian, with a shrill howl, fell backward from his horse. At the same time the old ranger shot upward and assumed the position vacated by the redskin. Then, turning upon the astonished Blackfeet, he sent several bullets among them. Almost before they could realize what had occurred, the valiant ranger was careering over the moonlit prairie once more, with a fair prospect of eluding his enemies. They chanced to have their weapons ready, however, and immediately sent a storm of missiles after the fleeing man.

The effect was disastrous to him, for one of the arrows, sent by no mean hand, pierced the horse's leg, and soon made its presence known, for the animal began to run lame. By this time the Indians were after him full tilt, whooping, yelling, and discharging every weapon they possessed at the daring paleface, who had eluded them so boldly when everything seemed to point toward his capture or death. Still, he continued to keep ahead of them, but it was only by dint of much effort; for the wound which his horse had received was beginning to tell upon the animal, and it required every effort on the part of the hunter to keep up the pace. He eagerly looked ahead, hoping to see something that would give him hope, but as far as the moonlight allowed him to se, nothing encouraging came within the scope of his vision. In his right hand he still firmly grasped the revolver, his only weapon saving the knife that rested in his belt, and it was evident that should matters come to close quarters once more, he would use both of these to advantage. Thus the mad race went on.

Unconsciously to both parties, it was converging toward a certain point where the white man would have a chance to show his strategic powers once more. Upon the prairie, a couple of miles from the mountains, there rested a peculiar stone. How it came there learned savans had never guessed, nor the freak of nature that had split it in twain; yet there it was, with a passage through the middle wide enough for three horsemen to ride abreast. When within thirty yards of this stone the horse upon which the mysterious hunter was mounted suddenly gave out, and he only saved himself from sharing the fate of the unfortunate animal by a dexterous leap, when he felt his steed falling under him. Once more he was afoot upon the prairie, with his exultant foes dashing down upon him with furious yells. The hunted man cast one swift glance around him, and then plunged into the grass, which close beside him grew to a height of several feet. When the Indians reached the spot, they plunged into this grass plot, searching right and left for their would-be prey, but not a single sign of the hunter could they find. Had he vanished in thin air? Just then one of the Blackfeet spied the peculiar rock, and in a moment had communicated his suspicions to the rest. Away they went pell-mell toward the place, feeling confident that they would find their game there.

This fact was soon made evident, for a couple of shots sounded, and each was immediately followed by a death-cry from a brave. Bending low upon the necks of their mustangs, the remainder of the vengeance party sped forward. Once they reached the rock and the intrepid hunter would stand no show whatever. As they advanced they separated, so as to come upon

the rock in several directions, and thus diminish the hunter's chances. Three more shots sounded, and two of these proved fatal to as many steeds of the Blackfeet, thus dismounting a couple more. No further opposition was made to the advance of the Indians, who a few seconds later reached the rock. While half a dozen shot around it, others dismounted and boldly plunged into the opening. To the extreme amazement of all, not a sign could they discover of the enemy. He had been here, that they were ready to swear, but in some mysterious manner he had eluded them. Beyond the rock the grass was short, and it seemed utterly impossible for any one to be concealed in it. Amazement rendered the Indians speechless, and those who guarded the rock sat upon their horses around it like so many statues. One of these, hearing a noise above him, looked up just in time the see the form of the mysterious hunter, knife in hand, leaping from the basin-shaped top of the rock, only half a dozen feet above the Indian's head, and land behind him on the mustang.

"Reckon thar ain't nobody to home hyar, seein' as I've knocked till my kunckles are sore. So I am goin' in an' make myself to home. Thet's me, Roarin' Ralph Rockwood."

So he lifted the latch and went into the cabin. A cheery fire was burning on the hearth, and he seated himself in a chair and indulged in reflections. He picked up a number of packages from a table, and the light from the fire proved them to be greenbacks. It appeared to Ralph that a band of counterfeiters was around. Suddenly he heard a sound from the outside. He bounded to a ladder leading to the loft and soon he was secreted up there. He was none too soon, for suddenly two men entered the cabin. Roaring Ralph, who was peeking through a crack in the floor, uttered a cry.

"Yaller Bob, by the eternal!" was his comment.

Soon the newcomers were seated and in conversation.

"So you hate Roaring Ralph?" inquired Yaller Bob.

"Like pizen."

"My sentiments exactly."

"He's responsible for this"—as he spoke he swept back the mass of hair on his head, and revealed the fact that his ears were not where they should have been. Some hand had sliced them off.

Ralph knew him now. It was his old enemy, Black Donald.

"This is a cozy den. Where is the package I left here on the table? The boys will want that when they come."

"Who carries such a knife around these diggins?" Then the man Black Donald exclaimed as he saw the name carved upon the handle:

"Roaring Ralph Rockwood, you bet!"

"What is it?" asked Yaller Bob.

"Look at the handle! Roaring Ralph has been here!"

"Your deadly enemy is in this vicinity, Black Donald."

"Bring me face to face with the critter, an' I'll wring his pizen neck!" said Donald.

A human form dropped from an open trap in the floor above and Black Donald saw before him his mortal foe.

"Hyar we air, Black Donald," cried Roaring Ralph, "an' one of us stays hyar."

CHAPTER VII.—Reckless Rupert.

A small five blazed in the heart of the forest, and bending over it was the same young girl whom we saw at the shooting match upon the border, and whom Colonel Leonard had called his daughter Dolly. To many upon the border she was now known under another name, and this was the musical one of Prairie Belle. Even as she watched the frugal supper cooking, the bushes parted and a young fellow stepped into view. There could be no mistake about his identity; there was the same clear-cut face that bore a marvelous resemblance to the girl's, the same curly head, and upright form we have seen once before, when he stood up before the assembled settlers and soldiers and won the prize which he had never received. It was Silver Rifle. There was a strange, sad expression upon his face that told of some heart trouble, which will be revealed as this story progresses. On the other hand, the young girl apppeared to be all life and animation, as though it was her loving duty to cheer her companion.

"Watchman, how goes the night?" she asked, with a laugh, as the young sharpshooter reached her side.

"Coast seems to be all clear. Reckon we'll have supper now if it's ready," he replied, the cloud passing from his brow at the sound of her sweet voice.

"Supper is ready."

While they were thus engaged in eating, a human form was crawling through the forest in the direction of their little camp. This silent crawler was no greasy, paint-bedaubed Blackfoot warrior, but a young hunter clad in a new suit of buckskin that became him wonderfully. Now and then he paused, and arising upon his knees, took in his surroundings. Through the sparse undergrowth the fire of the young fugitives shone like a beacon, and toward this star of hope he was dexterously making his way. Finally, when he was near enough to see distinctly, he cautiously raised himself and glided behind a tree. This act revealed his features and identity. It was Reckless Rupert. What was he doing in this far-away northern forest? The fact of his emotion at the sight of the young girl explained in part his mission, for he had felt his heart stirred at the sight of her as it had never been before by womankind.

From his place of espionage he could see the two by the fire distinctly. His eyes rested the longest upon the young girl; indeed, they seemed to be riveted there as if she possessed a magnetic power over him. This was nothing singular, for he had loved the young girl these many months back, though it was a silent affection. Finally, in glancing around, his eyes fell upon Silver Rifle, and a dark cloud passed over his face. Reckless Rupert was a handsome man, and, as his name signified, a daring one; still there was much that was good in his composition, and which would be brought to the surface at times when the occa-

sion demanded. He looked on Silver Rifle as his rival, for there could be no mistaking the fact that these two loved each other. His eyes were glued upon them; he saw the young girl place her hand upon the head of the prairie sharpshooter as if to cheer him, and then Silver Rifle, drawing her down to him, gently kissed her.

There was no demonstrative affection in the action, but it showed the deep love that bound these two together. Reckless Rupert gave a groan that welled up from the heart as he saw this, for it seemed to seal his doom. Up to this time he had hoped that something might arise to befriend him, but in this kiss he read the destruction of his wishes. He bowed his head upon the tree and gave way to bitter reflections. He was aroused from this state, not by any movement of the two by the campfire, for they were still sitting there, gazing into the coals. The sounds he heard came from the surrounding forest, and to the ear of an amateur would not have been anything unusual. To Reckless Rupert, however, the case was extremely different. He had been a ranger upon the plains for many a year, and to him these wolf howls were very significant, insomuch as he believed them to be counterfeit. Eagerly he listened for a repetition of the suspicious sounds, nor were they long in coming. There could now be no mistake; the Blackfeet were among the trees, having doubtless been attracted by the light of the campfire, and in a very short time it would be too late to warn the lovers. Reckless Rupert lost no time. Leaping forward, he reached the camp in a few great bounds. The young man heard him coming, and such was the rapidity of his actions that by the time Rupert had gained the side of the little fire he found the rifle of the other bearing upon his breast.

"What would you?" sternly demanded Silver Rifle, who had immediately recognized the other as his rival at the shooting match, and was suspicious of his presence there.

"Hush!" cried Rupert, "you are surrounded by Indians. Listen, and you will hear their signals to each other among the trees. A few more minutes and any warning would have been too late."

"I am inclined to believe you," said Silver Rifle, lowering his weapon. "I have been upon the border long enough to distinguish the mock cries, when my attention is called to them, at least. What would you do, friend?"

"Do! First of all this fire must go out."

Suiting the action to the word the young hunter sprang upon the fire, kicking the embers right and left, and stamping upon them so savagely that one would imagine he had an especial spite against each individual one. In the sixth part of a minute hardly a sign of the fire remained.

"Now we must get out of this as speedily as possible. I do not doubt your knowledge of woodcraft, but as I have scouted in this part of the country before I know something of our whereabouts; so if you have no objection, I will assume the position of guide."

"I accept your proposition with thanks, and believe you mean well. Before we move let me ask you one question, strange though it may appear to you. Are you aware of the presence of Colonel Harvey and his men anywhere in the vicinity?"

"I have not seen or heard a thing of the colonel since that day of the shooting match," replied Reckless Rupert, wondering at the strangeness of the question put to him.

"That is enough—we entrust ourselves to your guidance. I must apologize at a more fitting time for the suspicions I entertained concerning your presence here. Lead on, sir. Come, Dolly, give me your hand."

Reckless Rupert now found himself in a strange position. Here was the girl whom he fairly worshiped, and either her lover or husband, he knew not which, but at any rate the man who stood between him and that which his soul longed to possess. Naturally he should have hated Silver Rifle bitterly; but to his surprise, he found that he entertained a feeling of respect and friendship for the young sharpshooter. These two he was trying to lead to a place of safety, while the signals of the Blackfeet were ringing through the forest. Reckless Rupert was a man well versed in prairie lore, and yet he was not the very best one in all the world to take friends out of such a trap, for as a general thing, his methods were of too desperate a nature. Very often it is just such means that succeed the best; but under circumstances like the present, the better and safer plan would have been a more cautious one. From his heart he meant all for the best, and if his plans did fail, it was not because he failed to do his very utmost. As they walked noiselessly along, it became evident to even the young girl herself that the Indians were growing as thick as bees around a basswood in full blossom, for their signals sounded from almost every quarter. They had seen the fire extinguished, and realizing that those who had built it must be aware of their presence, did not hesitate to signal each other in an open manner.

"Be prepared for the worst," whispered Rupert, "for the pesky critters are as thick as skeeters in a swamp. Once we are discovered, and all hope of escape is well-nigh gone; but we can die like brave men, defending the young lady here. Hist!"

Close beside them there was a rustling of the bushes, and at the words of the young trapper himself and friends sank down to the ground. Another instant and there was a sharp, ringing cry that echoed through the forest, and then the figure of a painted Indian bounded from the bushes. It was still light enough for them to see him, and like a flash Silver Rifle discharged his weapon. Of course the Blackfoot went plunging into the bushes, a dead man, for the prairie sharpshooter never missed his aim; but before they could run a dozen paces, it seemed as if every tree gave up an Indian brave, and the two young hunters found themselves in the midst of a howling mass of painted devils, against whom they could make no more impression than on a solid rock.

Pandy Ellis certainly had his hands full. The revolver of old Pandy had diminished their number by several, and when Blue Bill emptied his rifle a death cry announced another redskin had gone to his eternity. Now old Pandy drew his long bowie. It was soon engaged in hot work. Meanwhile Blue Bill had engaged a brawny savage in a death struggle, and both had encroached so near the embankment of the river that the earth gave way, precipitating both into the water. The struggle still continued, however, and it was some time before Blue Bill succeeed in knifing

his antagonist. Then he clambered to the top of the bank, and looking up saw a shadowy figure above him.

The scene in the cabin as Roaring dropped through the trap was exceedingly dramatic. Roaring Ralph was the first to break the silence. He yelled:

"Black Donald, draw yer weapon. We'll have it out right here." The villain did so.

As the two fought all over the cabin floor it shook beneath their struggles and suddenly the rotten boards gave way and precipitated Yaller Bob, the earless man, and Roaring Ralph down—to what?

Vain were the struggles of Reckless Rupert and the young prairie sharpshooter. What could two men do against such a host of savages? Soon Silver Rifle was the captive of several redskins. When Rupert saw this he surrendered to the chief, Howling Wolf. Immediately hostilities ceased. The young girl was taken captive, and led off on a pony. The others now proceeded to a ravine where an encampment was made. Reckless Rupert never relaxed his endeavors to make an escape, however. In the morning the march was resumed. After tramping all day Howling Wolf's village was reached, and the captives were thrust into a stout cabin. It was the death lodge.

Blue Bill expected that the shadowy figure at the top of the bank was Pandy Ellis, and it was so. Old Pandy assisted him to a footing and then they left the ravine to follow the course of the river. After proceeding several miles they perceived a human figure stealing along about thirty yards ahead of them. They caught their breaths and remained transfixed. Once before they had seen that spectral figure, and both shook as they gazed upon it. The figure suddenly vanished and they continued their tramp. Coming to a hollow tree, they resolved to spend the night there. Blue Bill lay nearest the opening. During the night Blue Bill became restless and wide awake. Looking out of the opening in the tree whom should he see peering in but a savage. Their eyes met. Blue Bill thrust out his arm, caught the redskin by the throat and yanked him into the hollow tree. Then there followed a short but decisive struggle before the Indian gave up the ghost. Pandy was fully awake by this time. Sounds of more of the enemy were now heard outside, and Pandy and his chum climbed through the hollow tree, drew themselves out on a limb, from which they crossed over to an adjacent tree and so on down to the ground and away, perceiving as they did so that the redskins had set fire to the hollow tree in an endeavor to burn our friends out, as Pandy informed Blue Bill.

CHAPTER VIII.—Roaring Ralph's Matinee.

If excitement was what Roaring Ralph wanted, he certainly had enough of it. Yellow Bob had sat upon the table, evidently taking an infinite amount of delight in seeing his enemy engaged with someone else, for he could enjoy the affair without being in any danger himself, which was the best part of it all. When, however, the catastrophe occurred, the outlaw did not find his position as enviable as he could have wished. The shock must have been tremendous, for the three men, together with the rickety table, went plunging to the floor, and, unable to stand the shock after all that had previously occurred, this gave way and allowed the whole caboodle to go through. Very naturally, Roaring Ralph was the last to go through the gaping hole in the floor. Roaring Ralph had a dim idea of seeing lights and human forms as he shot through space, and then he struck upon the ground. Again fortune favored him, for Yellow Bob chanced to be directly beneath him, and thus became the recipient of almost the whole collision. As for Black Donald, he was so unlucky as to fall upon his back, with the table covering all his form but feet and head. He had not lost his senses from the shock, as was evidenced by the fact that he remained in this recumbent position during the exciting little scene that ensued. Roaring Ralph sprang to his feet like an acrobat, and threw a quick, astonished gaze around him. The sight he saw was enough to make a look of surprise come upon his face. He had fallen into the money-maker's den. Around him were half a dozen brawny men who had been engaged in some occupation before the arrival of the three, together with the table, through the floor. They had sprung erect, and were gazing upon the strange sight in dismay. Then up leaped Yellow Bob. With a string of oaths he turned upon his men, and pointed to the cool ranger.

"Seize that reptile! It's Roaring Ralph, and to the man that lays hands on him first I will present a thousand dollars in good gold!"

They sprang forward to obey the order. This was the signal for Roaring Ralph to begin operations. He had drawn his revolver immediately upon gaining his feet, and this was now held in readiness for work. The crack of the ranger's revolver sounded, and one of them went plunging into a heap of unfinished banknotes that must have represented about half a million dollars. Then Roaring Ralph uttered his shrill war-cry, with which he was accustomed to strike terror to the hearts of his foes, and descended upon the body of money-makers like a hawk falls upon a flock of doves. They scattered at his onslaught as a drove of pigs would when a dog suddenly makes a plunge among them. Thus the ranger was enabled to reach the ladder that led to the upper floor. There was an open trap above. Roaring Ralph lost no time.

Springing to the trap, he seized hold of the ladder, and by an exertion of his great strength, after mounting the ladder and reaching the floor above, he threw it over, and slammed down the trap. He then arose to his feet, laughed heartily, and seizing his rifle from the corner where it had remained all of this while, was about to unbar the door when he heard voices outside. At first he was half inclined to dash out and defy them anyhow, but presently he realized that there were quite a number of the newcomers, who were evidently the distributors of the money mill, coming for a fresh suppply of the "queer." Thinking that after his recent imbroglio discretion was the better part of valor, Roaring Ralph quietly unbarred the door, so as to give them the impression that

he had slipped out, when it came to an investigation, and then, with cat-like steps he mounted the ladder that led to the loft, where he crouched low, rifle in hand, as cool as any cucumber that ever grew in the shade of a cornstalk.

CHAPTER IX.—Singing Swan.

Neither Reckless Rupert nor the prairie sharpshooter had ever been cooped up in a Blackfoot Death Lodge before, but they knew what it meant, all the same. There was no hope for them, in the opinion of the Indians, who had already condemned them to death. Strange to say, however, the two men seemed in no wise concerned. They appeared as cheerful as if no danger hovered over them. Thus the night passed away. Morning came at last. A breakfast was brought to them upon platters of bark, consisting of venison and succotash, to which they did justice, as may readily be believed.

While they were eating, Silver Rifle looked up, and found himself the cynosure of a pair of black eyes, the owner of which had entered the lodge after the guard had withdrawn, but so silently that neither of them had been aware of her presence until the prairie sharpshooter thus accidentally discovered it. Their visitor was an Indian maiden, and it was plain to be seen that she was the daughter of a chief from her dress.

"Silver Rifle has come to the Blackfoot town. Many moons ago, Singing Swan saw him in a dream, and knew he would come some day. She is glad, for to her there has been none like Silver Rifle, the young hunter of the prairie."

Reckless Rupert looked quickly at his companion, to see how he would take this, and, to his surprise, saw an actual flush of pleasure upon the young man's face. Reckless Rupert pretended to be busily engaged in eating, but now and then a sly look told him that the arm of the young fellow was around the waist of the Indian girl, and a fiery indignation took possession of the honest trapper when he thought of Dolly, and what was due her from her lover, though he said nothing aloud. Silver Rifle entered into conversation with the Indian girl, and his face lighted up as she proposed the very plan he had in his mind. Pretty soon the girl left them alone, but not for long.

Suddenly the door was opened and a savage looked in and beckoned to the boys. Bound as they were, they followed the Indian outside. Just as they were outside the savage attacked them, but a well-directed kick from Rupert sent him to the ground. The boys were led back inside and their bonds cut. Several redmen later made their appearance, and Silver Rifle was taken away. What they were going to do with him Rupert could not at first guess, and it was only when he had climbed up to a crack in the log-wall and looked out, that he saw what it meant. The bonds of the prisoners had been cut, so Rupert did not have much trouble in scrambling up to the small hole through which the daylight was coming. Among some of the chiefs stood Silver Rifle, and in his hands was his favorite weapon. It was evident that they were about to witness some specimens of his skill. Soon the performonce was about to begin. Silver Rifle went through the old tricks of bringing down a hawk, splitting a bullet by shooting at a knife thrust into a tree, and striking a penny thrown up into the air. Then came more difficult work. Dolly made her appearance, and placed a small gourd upon her head, as on a previous occasion. Reckless Rupert shut his eyes and gritted his teeth until he heard the report, and then saw that the young girl was unharmed. The Indians were wonderstruck at the marksmanship of the young sharpshooter, but even more wonderful things were to come. Silver Rifle was shooting now with a greater object in view than he had ever had before, for the prize was life or death.

CHAPTER X.—The White Wizard.

A gourd was now placed upon a short stick, fifty paces away. The Indians could not understand what was about to be done with this, and, therefore, kept their eyes wide open. Silver Rifle spoke a few words to a chief near him, and then handed the man his rifle, with the hammer drawn back, ready for firing. Silver Rifle suddenly sprang forward and threw himself upon the ground, as if about to turn a handspring. He did not go all of the way over, however, but remained with his feet in midair, where his hands should have been. Then, after balancing himself, he stood upon his head, with his arms free. Acting according to instructions, the chief now placed the beautiful rifle in his hands, and, to the amazement of all the beholders, the young prairie sharpshooter proceeded to aim the weapon while thus standing upon his head. There came a sharp crack of the rifle, and those whose eyes had traveled meanwhile to the mark, saw the little gourd fly into several pieces. A chorus of grunts greeted the astonishing feat.

All honors were immediately granted to the young fellow, and there was now no danger of his being sacrificed upon the altar of vengeance. The hours passed slowly to Rupert, who had fully determined that when midnight had arrived he would attempt to tunnel out of the strong lodge. Gradually the light became less powerful, and at length, judging from the position of the moon as seen through the chink in the wall, he understood that the eventful time for him to begin work had arrived. Throwing himself upon the hard, rounded ground, he was about to begin operations when his ear detected a peculiar scratching noise. Instantly he was on his feet, all attention. In a few minutes he was able to decide that it came from the roof, and a short time later he made up his mind that the noise emanated from a keen knife in the hands of a powerful man.

Someone was cutting a road in to him. Doubtless it was Silver Rifle, who had commenced his work. By effecting the escape of Reckless Rupert probably he hoped that Dolly could be carried off, and the end for which he worked be achieved. Satisfied with this idea, he waited patiently. After a time he could see the bright sky through the hole, which grew rapidly under the keen knife of the unknown. Still there was no alarm from the guards. At length the hole was large enough to admit of the passage of a human body. Then the midnight worker bent his head and peered in. The moonlight fell upon the face. It was a painted one—the face of his sworn foe, the Blackfoot

brave who sought his life with the pertinacity of a fiend from Hades—Wolf Trailer.

CHAPTER XI.—Roaring Ralph In a Trap.

When Roaring Ralph had gained the garret of the old cabin he crouched low and listened. The old fellow had been pretty well worked up by the exciting scenes through which he had so recently passed, but he calmly awaited whatever the future might bring forth. His first act had been to shut down the trap through which he had leaped to the lower floor while Yellow Bob and the other man were talking of him. He could still hear the voices without, and they were close to the door. Exclamations arose on all sides when they saw the gaping hole in the floor, and the thought might have entered some of their minds that lightning had struck the house, but for the fact of a man's head making its appearance through the trap. It was Yellow Bob himself.

Presently his comrades made their appearance, and explanations were in order. The amazement of the newcomers, when they heard that one man had committed all this havoc, and that this person was no other than Roaring Ralph Rockwood, was intense. They were sure he was still in the loft. Roaring Ralph had discovered a trap that led to the sloping roof of the cabin, and upon looking out, saw that it was still as dark as Erebus. By and by he knew that nearly all of the men had left the house. Were they about to allow him a chance to come forth? Hardly. These men did not entertain such humane feelings toward him; they would have taken much more delight in seeing him torn to pieces by wolves, or burned to death. Ah! what was that? The old ranger began snuffing the air with great avidity, as he gave that start, and it did not take him long to discover what he suspected.

It was indeed true. The money-makers had contemplated a removal to another home base for some time, and the action had been forced upon them now by the demolition of their cabin at the hands of the ranger. It was decided, however, that he should never be allowed to boast of his exploit. They had him cooped up in the loft, and there he should remain until his fate overtook him. Immediate steps were taken toward removal, and with such a force of men to work as was on hand, it did not take long to clear the cabin of all they wished to save. Then dry grass and leaves were thrown into the lower room, and after his men had formed a complete circle around the house, Yellow Bob concluded that the time had come for the completion of his plans. A match was struck. Upon this being applied to the pile of tinder a bright flame flashed immediately into existence, and the doom of the cabin was sealed.

"Good-by, old thunderbolt of the Colorado canyon!" shouted the money chief, as he sprang from the door of the cabin and rejoin his men.

CHAPTER XII.—Again That Ghost.

Pandy spoke the truth when he declared that the Indians were trying to burn them out, supposing that they were still in the hollow tree. They had piled brushwood all about the hole in the base, and even pushed quite a quantity inside, to which a spark was applied, with the immediate result of sending the flames up the flume with the speed of a racehorse, there being such an excellent draught. Had the two hunters been in the tree their chances would have been exceedingly slim, for they would have had no opportunity to either go down or crawl up higher. When morning came the two men came out from the bushes upon the riverbank at the point where we first found them. There lay the log just as on the previous evening when they sat there and talked of their oath of vengeance and the marked trail. Suddenly old Pandy gave vent to a quick ejaculation, and dropped to his knees. Something upon the ground had caught his eye, and the way he scanned it, there could be no doubt but what the old man thought it of some importance.

"Great Snakes, Blue Bill, looky hyar; I leave it ter yer ter say what thet means," Pandy cried.

"Ternal buffalo hoofs if it ain't the trail of the marked moccasin!" he cried.

It did not take these two trailers long to find out the truth so far as the presence of the man they hunted was concerned. He had been lying behind the great log when they sat down upon it, and had without doubt heard all of their conversation. This must have been pleasant news for the hunted man. The trail was now plain as daylight, and they lost no time in starting off upon it. If the man could escape two such veterans as these he ought to be allowed his life.

In this way they came in sight of a dense copse, where the saplings grew thickly. Hardly had they sighted this than both men sank to the ground as if struck by a common impulse. A human form was moving in advance of them, and evidently about to issue forth from the thicket. Their game was run down. Pandy had one knee on the ground, and the rifle held in readiness. Whatever emotion he may have felt at the prospect of having the murderer of his old pard in his power did not show itself except in the look upon his face, and that was enough, for in it could be read the veteran ranger's whole soul. Just at this critical instant, however, Blue Bill gave vent to a low cry of amazement. At the same time his hand shot out and covered the hammer of Pandy's rifle, so that even had it fallen the weapon would not have been discharged.

"What in the tarnal creation do ye mean, Blue Bill?" growled the amazed Pandy.

"Hush! you would never have forgiven yourself that shot. Look again, old hoss, and you'll see, not the man we're arter, the maker of the Marked Moccasin trail, but that self-same ghost of Bolly Wherrit that can't rest easy in its grave!"

He was convinced and they proceeded on their way, but after a while fell into an ambush of Indians.

CHAPTER XIII.—Battle in the Strong Lodge.

Reckless Rupert could not repress an exclamation of mingled amazement and consternation when, upon looking up through the hole in the roof, his eyes fell upon the painted face of the brave whose hatred for him was so strong—Wolf Trailer. As he crouched there and gazed upon the

painted features of his foe, the hunter could not but admire the terrible hatred that would cause a man to descend to such means in order to accomplish his nefarious object. Having completed his means of ingress the dark-souled warrior, with murder in his heart, cast a last glance toward the coterie of guards seated some little distance from the door of the cabin, and then dropped through the hole, descending the rough wall with the agility of an ape. No sooner had he come near the bottom than a pair of steel-like arms encircled his half-naked form, and Wolf Trailer was in the embrace of Reckless Rupert. Then began the terrible struggle.

Wolf Trailer was not long in discovering that he had made a terrible mistake both in regard to the strength of the white man, and also his being unarmed. A feeling of numb horror took possession of the doomed Blackfoot, when he realized the awful predicament in which his rashness had placed him. Having conducted his expedition in secrecy, he could hope for no succor from friends, and must, therefore, submit to the inevitable, and meet his fate. Nor was it long in coming. There was a sudden rushing blow, a deep thud, and the blade of the white Hercules had cleft the Indian's black heart in twain. The Indian gave his death yell, sank to the floor, and just as the door swung open the white hunter clambered like an ape up the side of the cabin.

CHAPTER XIV.—A Wild Chase.

After leaving him for such a length of time, because events still more important claimed our attention, we must now return to the mysterious hunter who had left in such a desperate situation. He had quickly discovered that one of the halves into which the huge rock was divided was basin-shaped in the top, and that it would make him a good hiding-place he had not the least doubt. Of course, it would only be temporary, for the cunning Indians would eventually discover him; but his plan just then was to look out of the immediate future, and trust to his good fortune for a means of making his ultimate escape. Intent upon carrying out this idea, he clambered up the rock and concealed himself in its basin-shaped top just as his pursuers came thundering up and surrounded the queer rock. Raising his head above the edge of the rock, he saw one of the Blackfeet, who had been left to do the duty of sentry, seated on his mustang. Suddenly, with the bound of a tiger, the hunter had leaped from the rock—landing upon the mustang just in front of the Indian.

The animal, amazed at this sudden addition to his load, darted away like a meteor—a circumstance that suited the hunter exactly, and one which he felt called upon to assist by every means in his power, by thumping the animal's sides, and striking him on the neck with his gun, using the stock of it. By the time they had gone fifty yards the astonished redskin had partially recovered from the half stupor that seemed to come upon him when the hunter made his leap. This he evidenced by his actions. A pair of dusky arms glided around the form of the mysterious hunter, and as these suddenly closed upon him he found himself made the object of a peculiar embrace which was about as disagreeable as it was strange. His rifle lay in an advantageous position, for he could feet its muzzle pressing against the chest of the redskin as he bent forward.

There was a half-muffled report, and then a cry of intense agony broke from the lips of the dusky rider, so close to the ears of the mysterious hunter that he could not but start. The sinewy arms relaxed their hold, and so far as the redskin was concerned the white man had nothing more to fear, for when the report of the rifle sounded the mustang, still further alarmed, gave another leap forward, which action resulted in throwing the sorely wounded Indian from his seat. A half-muffled yell from the rear proclaimed that all of this little tragedy had been witnessed by the redskin's comrades, and the heavy pounding of hoofs upon the prairie announced that they were in hot pursuit. For this the hunter cared next to nothing. Gradually he was leaving the Indians behind, and had he kept straight on over the open land, in time he would undoubtedly have lost them, had no accident occurred.

It was his pleasure, however, to get among the trees, nor was he very long in reaching the point he had been aiming for. Quickly turning his steed to the left, he plunged into the growth, and was from that time lost to the sight of the Blackfeet, who might as well have searched in a haystack for a needle, as for the veteran hunter who had eluded them among the timber.

CHAPTER XV.—Burned Out.

Roaring Ralph's situation was anything but pleasant. He had entered the lodge of the money-makers, secreted himself in the loft, overheard the conversation of Yellow Bob, the money chief, and Black Donald, had suddenly made his appearance when the conversation had become warm concerning him, by dropping through an old trap in the middle of the floor, had engaged his old-time enemy, Donald, in mortal combat, and when the weak floor gave way, the three had been precipitated through the ragged opening among the counterfeiters below. Then there had ensued quite a lively time, Roaring Ralph finally escaping to the room above, and managing to keep his enemies down.

Now and then the crackling of flames came to his ear, which sound informed him that they had seized upon the woodwork of the cabin, and in a few more minutes would undoubtedly make their appearance through the floor. He had not long to wait. Like a serpent's tongue the wicked-looking little flame darted into view, flashed viciously for a dozen seconds, and withdrew slowly, as if loth to leave the spot. Now was his opportunity. Quickly he raised the trap in the roof. With the agility of a panther he drew himself through the opening, and shut down the trap just as the snake-like flame once more darted into view. So far, so good. As yet his enemies did not suspect his presence on the roof, and if he could only keep them in that delightful condition of ignorance all might yet be well

Having crossed the roof, he came to one end. Here the largest tree stood, and quite a goodly limb hung over the cabin. He seized the limb and descended. When near the ground he let go, to alight on top of another man, who ejaculated:

"B'ar's claws and buffler hoofs—hold on, stranger! We're friends, I reckon."

"How can I make sure of that?"

"Maybe you don't recognize my voice, Roaring Ralph, but I'm the fellow you took for a grizzly bear once upon a time away off in the direction of the Rockies. I reckon you can bring it to mind now."

"Sawdust an' sauerkraut, but will I ever furgit that time? An' so ye are the leetle detective chap what kerried Rocky Mountain Dick, the road-agent, off ter ther East? My mission in this hyar wilderness air ter find a lad called Silver Rifle, an' warn him thet ther colonel air arter him wid troops; an' blame ef I don't find him ef it takes all summer. Thet's me, Roarin' Ralph, an' don't ye furgit it!"

CHAPTER XVI.—Separated.

Sam Wherrit, the maker of the marked trail, had been in luck so far, for he had succeeded in avoiding those who were upon his track, and besides, was near the Blackfoot town where he expected to find safety. When the Indians heard that Blue Bill, and the famous border trapper, old Pandy Ellis, were upon the trail of their White Chief, they said but little, though their actions were significant. The White Chief was sent forward to the village in charge of a guide, and then the redskins, stealing through the forest along Sam's back trail for a score or two of yards, proceeded to lie in ambush for the two rangers. They knew Pandy of old, and were quite confident that he would not give up a trail in which he was so intensely interested, simply because darkness happened to come on. In this supposition they were quite correct, as the reader has already seen. When the yelling demons sprang up on every side of them, and several fires of touchwood that had been held in readiness were ignited, the scene was one of tremendous power. Then the scene became a melee.

The Indians knew with whom they had to deal, and exerted themselves to the utmost to either capture or kill the veteran trapper; but when they determined upon this course they were pursuing a difficult matter. Like a whirlwind he rushed here and there, leaving a death track behind him, and before the fight had been in progress two minutes the redskins had given up all hope of capturing him. Blue Bill had not been quite so fortunate, for although he, too, had proved a giant in strength, hurling the redskins this way and that, there came a time presently when a spent bullet, glancing from a tree near by, struck him on the head. Though he still retained his senses, the blow seemed to weaken and confuse him, so that before he could recover himself, a portion of the red band had hurled themselves upon him, bearing him to the earth. He was soon in their power, and they quickly lashed his hands together. Old Pandy was still raging around like a lion, but as the force that had been disposing of Blue Bill could now be spared to unite with the others against him, the time had come when he must of necessity turn his back on the foe. Giving a hoarse yell of defiance, the veteran ranger burst through his assailants as a giant would a pack of pigmies, and leaping into the surrounding bushes vanished from view. Thus the two comrades were separated. Would it please fate to again unite them? We shall see.

CHAPTER XVII.—A Surprise.

It had seemed as though the young white ranger, Reckless Rupert, was about to have his escape frustrated, after all. The captors of Blue Bill, contrary to the custom of the Indians, had entered the village quietly with their prisoner, no doubt because they had lost so many of their number that shame had seized upon them. A portion of the band, having charge of Blue Bill, made at once toward the prison lodge, unaware of the fact that it had already an occupant. As they drew near they were amazed to hear the death-cry of Wolf-Trailer. At the same time several warriors, leaping erect, informed them that they had been stationed there as guards. A rush was made immediately for the Death Lodge, and to the amazement of all, the door was found secure.

In their haste and excitement a slight hitch occurred, some pulling the door before the bar had been withdrawn, which, of course, rendered the task a doubly hard one. This caused a delay of perhaps a minute, and was the salvation of the white hunter, for had the door been thrown open immediately he would have been found clinging to the side of the cabin. As it was, he found time to gain the opening and clamber through. When the redmen finally opened the door and rushed into the place, they were able to see immediately the hole in the roof. What first chained their attention, however, was the body of the slain Blackfoot brave whose hatred had led him to adopt the strange tactics that had eventually brought him to his death.

"Wolf-Trailer!" they said.

From this state of stupefaction they were aroused by cries without, which told plainly of another combat of some description, and thoroughly worked up to a tremendous pitch of excitement, the braves lost no time in rushing out, half believing that the terrible Pandy Ellis had already followed them, and was effecting the rescue of his comrade, Blue Bill. This they speedily found was an error on their part, for those in whose charge the trapper had been left were not engaged in any turmoil, nor had Blue Bill exhibited any desire to escape.

Reckless Rupert had lost no time in clambering out upon the roof of the lodge, and when the red imps had managed to open the door he was dangling from the further end, ready to jump. Down he went like a rocket, struck the earth, staggered a little because of his peculiar situation, and started to dart away. Just at this critical juncture a human form leaped erect in front of him. It was the young prairie sharpshooter, Silver Rifle.

"Come this way; I was about to attempt your rescue myself. Into this lodge—quick!"

As they entered the lodge it proved to have an occupant, much to the surprise of the hunter, who had left it empty ten minutes ago. A tall, lank Indian brave confronted them, and as Reckless Rupert would have hurled himself upon the redman, the latter caught him in an iron grip, exclaiming:

"Hold hard, ole hoss, till we compare notes."

It was old Pandy Ellis, sailing under false colors! After Blue Bill had been taken to the Indians' camp Pandy Ellis crawled back to the scene of the battle, disguised himself as an Indian, and succeeded in entering the Indian encampment, where he met Silver Rifle. Between them they had taken Dolly from the lodge where she was kept, and were about to rescue Reckless Rupert when he unexpectedly dropped into their hands.

CHAPTER XVIII.—The Secret Expedition.

The setting sun shone upon a singular scene in a ravine just at the edge of the great timber lands, among which lay the village of the Blackfeet. Half a hundred horsemen were about encamping for the night. They wore the uniform of the United States troops, and at their head was the officer whom we saw once before at the prairie shooting-match, when Silver Rifle worsted all competitors. Besides these men, the colonel had half-a-dozen famous scouts, some of whom were now out, having gone in advance of the cavalry. One of them had agreed to meet the colonel at this spot, which was known throughout the neighborhood as Moose Head Gully. The soldiers went into camp. Half a score of tents were placed in position, and the colonel, while quiet preparations were in progress for the evening meal, stood beside a tall, dead tree, looking earnestly toward the denser timber. As the colonel stood there, wrapped in deep meditation, a man dressed in buckskin approached.

"We are near our goal, colonel. In this timber-stretch lies the Indian village. Thus far we have followed the young fellow's trail, and now that we have found out that they were captured by the Blackfeet, our work will be easy. It may be, however, that we will arrive too late to save the boy, for if that was Reckless Rupert's trail, as I am ready to swear, then there must have been tall fighting done, for which the reward will be death to the men."

"Heaven forbid, Lasso Rube," ejaculated the colonel, in such evident alarm that the scout looked up at him in astonishment.

"I thought you hated this young Silver Rifle, colonel?" he said, half questioningly.

"Hate him! No, you are mistaken, Rube. There is a question of dispute between him and me that forms a chasm which nothing can bridge over. If that was spanned, then—but, pshaw! it is nonsense to even think of such a thing occurring, for it can never be done. For this cause has my daughter left me, and it is Dolly whom I seek to save."

For a few minutes there was silence between them. Then from out the dense forest there strode a buckskin-clad man, who was dressed somewwhat after the Mexican style, and who was no other than the noted ranger of the southwest, Mexican Mose. As he came up he saluted the colonel, and then sat down upon the log. Upon hearing the scout's report, a council of war was held, in which the several rangers present, together with the lieutenant under the colonel in command of the company, participated.

CHAPTER XIX.—The Man In the Log.

"B'ar's claws an' buffler hoofs, but yer news takes my breath away!"

As the old Colorado ranger uttered these words, he sank back upon a log as if in truth entirely overcome.

"Now break it gently ter me. Tarnal snakes an' snails! thet air ther wust piece o' intelligence I hev heard fur many a day. My ole friend Bolly Wherrit dead—murdered! Thar's more in them words nor I kin git through my head ter once.

"Bolly Wherrit dead. The man I've laid down wid under the same blanket, fought side by side wid, tramped alongside an' swore by these twenty years back, gone under. Heavings ter Betsy but it makes me feel queer, my flesh creeps ter think o' it. No wonder ole Pandy air a ragin' like a mad bull. Sausage an' sauergraut; tie me up in a blanket an' throw me inter ther great Colorado canyon ef I kin realize thet ole Bolly Wherrit air planted underground."

"Neither air he, ole hoss!"

"Traps an' trails! Dust my Sunday breeches, did ye hear that voice, kimrade? I wonder ef it air a sign that I'm goin', too, soon. Histe me into a Pache's grave, but I'll swar that war the voice o' Bolly Wherrit, Pandy's ole pard, an' ther man ye say hez been under the sod this month er so. Trousers an' tomcats, but I'm a hull quandary mixed up!"

"Yer a blamed fool, ole Ralph, ef ye want ter know it."

Roaring Ralph this time sprang up as if imbued with a sudden shock from an electric battery, and giving one great leap, turned and faced the log on which he had been seated. The detective still stood motionless, for he did not fully understand the matter, and there was nothing ghostlike about the proceeding to him.

"Painters an' powderhorns! rub me agin a haycutter ef he hain't addressin' me from ther grave. Bolly, ole chap, air that ye?"

"I reckon it are, old duffer," came the muffled and mysterious voice.

"Mustangs an' Mexicans! Whar air ye—an' kin I do anything ter ease yer sperit, departed kimrade?" asked the accommodating ranger.

"I'm in this hyar blasted ole log, an' stuck fast, so I reckon ther best thing yo' kin do fur ther sperit o' ther departed Bolly Wherrit are ter pull his body out o' hyar right lovely, afore I split ther log a-larfin'!"

Roaring Ralph immediately set to work to release the man in the log, but it was a hard job, as he soon found out. Roaring Ralph exerted himself to the utmost, and the man in the log also used his muscles. The result was success. How the hunter had become stuck in the log no one could ever see, but it was probably like thrusting a barbed fishhook into one's finger, very easy to put in, but deuced hard to pull out,

his arms illustrating a double barb. Had it not been for the presence of our rollicking old friend, the imprisoned ranger could never have come out of that end of the log where he had entered, but would have been compelled to crawl along and eventually cut through the half rotten terminus with his knife. Upon being thus set at liberty the old ranger stepped over and took his rifle from the cavity that had so lately been his prison, after which he faced Roaring Ralph.

"Dust my Sunday breeches!" roared the reckless trapper, "ef it ain't Pandy Ellis' pard, Bolly Wherrit, in ther flesh!"

After consulting together for some time they started for the Blackfeet encampment. They therefore left the hollow log and moved forward, heading through the forest in the direction whence the Blackfoot town lay, according to their judgment. When they got there they heard a great commotion going on; as soon as it ceased they crept toward the council lodge.

They had arrived at the time when Pandy Ellis, dressed in the Indian costume of Wolf Eye, whom he had killed, was circulating among the Blackfeet while they were holding a consultation. They saw Pandy leap to the side of Blue Bill, who was a captive, and cut his bonds. Then the two rushed away. But Pandy, leaving Blue Bill to look after himself, ran to the chief's lodge, at the top of which lighted candles were hoisted on a hoop, and cut the cords which held the hoop.

CHAPTER XX.—The Border Whirlwind.

No sooner had the ranger's knife parted the strands than he held the end of the cord. Springing back half a dozen feet he gave it a strong and sudden pull, elevating the lights still half a dozen feet further, then suddenly let go of the cord. Down came the hoop with a crash. Darkness ensued. So far Pandy's plan had worked admirably, but of course there was more to follow. A tremendous uproar ensued when the lights were thus suddenly extinguished, for every Indian seemed to vie with the rest in yelling himself hoarse. Although the candles were about all extinguished by the sudden descent of the hoop to which they were fastened, the darkness that ensued was not very intense. Through the large opening and over the heads of the Indians who crowded in, the light from the fires managed to enter. They had not been cared for so well since the council commenced, but still were capable of giving quite enough light to distinguish different persons.

A few hurried words in the ear of Blue Bill quickly let him into the main particulars of Pandy's plan, and he was ready to second it. Toward the rear of the great tent they made their way, killing as they went. Together they reached the canvas at the end of the circus tent. The bowie and revolver had opened a way for them when forcing a passage seemed an impossible task, and the path of blood left behind them attested to the terrible nature of this proceeding. Pandy paused for a few seconds, but only to cast a hurried glance behind him. He gave vent to a terrible war-cry that rang out like a pæan of victory above the yells of the excited Blackfeet.

Then his bloodstained knife made one downward swoop. As he had intended, the canvas was rent by the blow, leaving a means of egress for his comrade and himself. Through this they went with all speed, and almost before the Indians, who had caught sight of them by the aid of the resurrected candles, could realize it, they were on the outside of the great tent. Here Pandy came to an abrupt pause. The wind was blowing small guns, as a sailor would have probably expressed it, and the tent was straining at the long rope that held it, like a ship at her cable. In an instant the old ranger's keen knife was at the rope. There was a sharp report, almost like the discharge of a pistol, and the faithful rope had parted. Unable longer to withstand the force of the gale, the great tent seemed to totter for a dozen seconds, and then, to the horror of the Indians, came down with a rush, entangling fully four score of redskins under the canvas.

When he heard the racket begin in that direction the detective was sure his comrades, Roaring Ralph and the phantom trapper, had fallen into mischief, and remembering their directions to create a diversion in their favor if such a thing was possible, hastened to fire the piles of dried grass. The fierce wind, seizing upon the flames, soon communicated them to the adjoining lodges, and the destruction of the whole Blackfeet village seemed imminent.

Pandemonium had certainly broken loose, to judge by the yells that sounded. Never had there been so much excitement within the bounds of the Indian village. There was the escape of the prisoners, Reckless Rupert, Silver Rifle and the pale flower; the capture of Blue Bill; sudden appearance of the terrible Heavy Knife in their sacred council lodge; the tremendous upheaval that followed when he put out the lights and, aided by Blue Bill, cut his way through their crowded ranks; the fall of the circus tent with fully four score of warriors caught underneath it, and finally the fearful discovery that the lower end of the village was on fire, with the fierce wind blowing the flames toward them in a manner significant and dangerous.

The Indians went to work with a will to put an end to the conflagration that was already threatening to destroy their entire vilage. Just here their natural shrewdness came into play. Instead of wasting their time in subduing the flames themselves, which would have been an almost impossible task, considering their limited water supply and facilities for throwing it upon the flames—they wisely resorted to tearing down the lodges in a straight line across the village, and then working toward the flames, saving all they could. Necessarily, therefore, the fire must come to a close as soon as the barrier presented by the open space was reached. It happened, just as the redskins had considered, for the furious fire finding no new material upon which to feed, seemed to gasp wildly, making ineffectual attempts to reach the lodges beyond, and then slowly succumbed to the inevitable.

CHAPTER XXI.—Tracked With Torches.

As has been said before, Bolly Wherrit and the old ranger, Roaring Ralph, watched the strange

events that were taking place within the council lodge of the Blackfeet with great interest.

Much as the two men would have delighted in assisting their beloved comrades, this was rendered impossible by the action of old Pandy himself in extinguishing the lights, though when he did so he had no idea that friends were near. All they could do now was to remain quiet, and with ready weapons, assist the two, should they be so fortunate as to cut their way through the mass of savages and out of the tent. Presently, however, a slit appeared in the canvas close to where they were standing, and two men sprang through into the open air. Even in the semi-gloom of the spot they recognized Blue Bill and the old prince of the prairie trappers. When Pandy stooped and cut the rope that proved such a support to the great lodge, both of them held their breath, for they at once grasped his idea. Then with a crash and a whirl, the whole fabric keeled over. A true ranger yell broke from the lips of the two lookers-on, and immediately they bounded to the side of Pandy and Blue Bill. Bolly's great hat was pulled down further than ever over his face, for he did not wish his pard to recognize him yet. He also managed to avoid the old ranger's eye, and naturally Pandy thought it was some friend of Ralph's who was a stranger to him. At any rate, this was no time for the meeting and the questions that would ensue, and Bolly was very wise in restraining his earnest desire to grasp the hand of his chum, and let him know he was still in the land of the living. The good news would keep, and now that he was in Pandy's company he could make sure that the vengeance he had sworn upon the alarmed fugitive Sam Wherrit did not reach its mark.

In a few words Pandy told that he had left some friends not far away, and towards the lodge of the late Wolf-Eye he led the way at a swinging trot, the others following, with Bolly Wherrit bringing up the rear. The moon was now shining in the far eastern sky, but a better light than that was creeping up.

"Looky thar!" suddenly said Roaring Ralph, pointing to the end of the village where the red tongues of flame were already beginning to shoot upward into the air. "Chaw my ole moccasin fur soup ef ther little detective ain't gone an' done as we told him. Bullets an' bayonets, but this air exciting for the reds."

It was, most certainly, but then they hoped to turn the tables in a short time and make it equally as exciting for the whites. The distance from the great tent to the lodge of Wolf-Eye was not very great, and they soon reached the latter, having only met one Indian brave on the way, and he had saved his life by darting into a skin tepee, for our friends were in too great a hurry to bother with seeking him out. Pandy plunged into the lodge, uncertain as yet whether his friends had continued their way or met with some obstacle and returned to the starting point, but as the lodge contained no occupant he was fain to believe that they had gone on. He led the way into the ravine himself, and as our little party did not care much whether they were seen or not, their progress was much faster than that of Reckless Rupert and his companions had been.

They knew very well that the Indians would not waste much time in fooling about the village, and once on their trail they would follow it with the pertinacity of so many bloodhounds. When the little band reached the edge of the forest, Pandy led them along for perhaps forty yards, and then drew up in the shadow of a huge sycamore tree, whose trunk was a perfect giant in size. Here the old ranger chief uttered the cry of the night-hawk, very naturally following it closely with the mournful howl of the timber wolf. As the racket in the village had died away in part, the signals sounded loud and clear upon the night air. Immediately three forms appeared in view from the other side of the great tree, one of which was undoubtedly a female. Of course, these were Reckless Rupert, Silver Rifle, and the prairie belle, Dolly. There was now seven in the party, with one more to hear from. The little detective soon showed up at a signal from Roaring Ralph, and they were now united. Bolly still kept in the background for he did not believe the time had yet come to disclose himself. As Pandy was unaware of the fact that he was still in the land of the living, a few hours more or less could not possibly make any difference to him, and while they were so near the village it might be dangerous to upset the old ranger in any way, especially when they needed his advice and cool-headed ideas so much.

Led by Ellis, the little party at once started off through the forest. They had not been gone over two minutes when a Blackfoot warrior crept out of a clump of bushes close by, where he had been hidden, and made toward the adjacent village at full speed. In less than twenty minutes four score of determined and enraged Indians, many of whom bore torches, were upon the trail of the palefaces. The fugitives had not traveled far before they saw the torches of their pursuers following them. They made up their minds that they would have to fight it out with the redskins, and selecting a good high spot where they could have a decided advantage, they waited for their enemy. They were not long in coming. Then waged a fierce battle, in which our friends were victorious. Pandy Ellis and Bolly Wherrit came face to face. They fell on each other's necks. The savages having retreated, our friends now looked about them, and discovered a cave, which they entered, carrying torches. But they had been seen by one of the Blackfeet, and he signaled to the rest to come up. While they were in the cave Bolly Wherrit and Pandy Ellis had a long talk about their various experiences.

CHAPTER XXII.—The Detective Bags His Game.

"Hist!"

At this thrilling, hissing whisper our friends came to a sudden halt. Pandy Ellis, who carried the torch, had thrust it into a pool of water at his side, so that with marvelous quickness darkness had come upon the scene. He had seen a light ahead, and as their own torch was extinguished, the others also discovered it. Pandy was a man never to be caught napping, and he quickly made up his mind to discover what this

meant. It could not be the sun, for dawn was just about breaking, and as to its having any connection with the infernal regions or disembodied spirits, the old ranger stood ready to ridicule the idea. So he left them there, and began making his way cautiously forward. It needed all of his prowess to successfully advance upon the mysterious light through such Stygian darkness, where a thousand traps and pitfalls might be awaiting his unwary feet, but the old ranger was the best man in the world for such an undertaking, and he proved this by not meeting with a single mishap during his forward movement. When he had turned several bends, he found himself looking upon a curious scene.

At first he thought it was a band of trappers encamped in the cavern, but quickly realized his mistake. This was the new abode of the border money-makers whom Roaring Ralph had worried into destroying their old cabin home with himself in it, as they thought. They were the ones who had ascended the canyon as far as it was practicable in advance of our friends. He had heard from old Ralph and the little detective enough about those fellows to recognize them at once. Of course they must look upon the money-makers as deadly foes; for such they would undoubtedly prove to be in a conflict; and, besides, they were allies of the Indians. When Pandy Ellis made his way back to the others, and reported what he had seen, a hurried council took place. The little detective was terribly anxious to be at them, and as there was no other way out of the matter, the others soon agreed.

A forward movement was at once commenced. Dolly was placed in the rear, so as to be out of the way of stray bullets, and then the little band advanced slowly along the passageway, led by Pandy and his old pard. The money-makers only numbered about nine in all. They were busy when our friends suddenly burst upon them; but, knowing what capture meant, they offered resistance. Yellow Bob was amazed to find in the antagonist who crossed knives with him, the man whom he had so much cause to hate, and whom he thought had surely been cremated with the cabin; but for the time he became a human wildcat, and slashed away with such a vim that the Colorado ranger, in duty bound, soon felt compelled to give him his quietus. It was not long before the battle was over. Three money-makers, besides the leader, remained as prisoners in their hands, and the rest had gone to that bourne whence no traveler e'er returns. The detective tumbled their machinery into a chasm near at hand, and destroyed the counterfeit money they had made, only retaining samples, which were to be used in convicting the men when in the United States court. They once more moved forward.

It soon turned out just as our friends suspected it would. There were two entrances. This fact had not been gleaned from any of the prisoners, for they were glum and sullen, and would not give a bit of information to please their captors, especially when they learned that the Blackfeet were after them. One of the fellows had escaped during the melee and vanished down the passage in an opposite direction to that from which they had come, and forming their ideas from this, they hurried forward. The Indians unfortunately were well acquainted with the strange cavern, and finding one entrance barred, hastened around to the other, where they came upon a fresh trail.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Safe At Last.

Our friends were again at bay. This time the situation was not so wholly in their favor, for the ground was more level, and their breastworks detached rocks. The redskins had followed them with the keenness and pertinacity of sleuth-hounds, finally overtaking them here. One rush had been made, but the deadly rifles of the whites had warned them that this system of tactics would not be tolerated, and they withdrew to a distance in order to consider other plans that would be more in keeping with discretion. Pandy Ellis had freed the hands of the prisoners, and placing their own revolvers in them, sternly ordered them to fire; and that the first man who refused to obey would suffer for it they readily knew. Perhaps their shots were not so effective as those of the others, but they did not dare to shoot wild while the old veteran's keen eyes were upon them, and the Indians were rushing forward in a body, so that in all probability some of their bullets told. At any rate, their attitude seemed hostile, aud the reports of their weapons added to the general clamor, but the rangers were too cunning for them, and each artifice only ended in disaster for its originators. Reckless Rupert watched Dolly with the carefulness of a brother, and did everything he could for her comfort. To his surprise, Silver Rifle seemed in no wise jealous at his attentions, but rather seemed to be pleased with them. What could it mean? Was he tired of the prairie belle, and glad to get her off his hands? Rupert grew indignant in his heart.

"If he has discovered an iota, by my faith, his life shall answer for it. I will be a brother to her, since fate has denied me the right to a dearer relation," he murmured.

Afternoon came, and still the situation remained unchanged. The Indians were determined to stand it out if it took all summer, and hoped that the whites would leave their position when the shades of darkness fell, for then they could fall upon them from the right and from the left, and quickly get their work in. It was not very far from evening. The Blackfeet had rigged up a moving barricade, made from small trees that had been felled and fastened together. Behind this a score of them had advanced, and found shelter among some loose rocks that were connected with those behind which our friends knelt. Then the barricade was lugged slowly back, probably with the intention of bringing out a score more.

The little detective declared himself able to dislodge those who had taken refuge among the rocks, and proceeded to do so. His manner of going about it was singular indeed. From his pocket he drew out a rubber sling and a small box, which, upon being opened disclosed a dozen balls of intense blackness, about the size of marbles. These were a species of hand grenade, and being composed in part of dynamite, would explode with a tremendous concussion. While

the rangers stood ready with their rifles, the detective measured the distance with his eye, then drew back his rubber sling, and with a quick movement, discharged the ball. He alone could trace its course through the air, but a smile of satisfaction wreathed his lips as he saw that it was going all right. Then the earth seemed to be shaken by a tremendous explosion among the rocks where the redskins had taken refuge. He followed it up with several more in rapid succession. The first shock had probably stunned the Blackfeet, but as the others came, they dashed out like so many crazy men, "making a blue streak for shelter," as Roaring Ralph expressed it. Then the trappers' rifles cracked merrily, and quite a number of the red nomads of the northwest fell to rise no more. At about the same time the cheery sound of a cavalry bugle was heard, giving the well-known "charge," and the Blackfeet were discovered racing everywhere in a panic-stricken way, with the United States soldiers pursuing them.

"You are lost," said Reckless Rupert, turning to Silver Rifle, but the young prairie sharpshooter smiled and shook his head.

CHAPTER XXIV.—Conclusion.

While his men were pursuing the terrified Blackfeet in all directions, chasing them like so many sheep, hewing and shooting them down, the colonel rode toward the little company of fugitives. Reckless Rupert knew that the crisis was at hand. His fears were about to be set at rest forever, but in a way that would pain him terribly. He saw the faces of Dolly and Silver Rifle light up as they recognized Colonel Harvey. The arms of the young prairie belle were immediately around the neck of the sharpshooter.

"How she loves him," muttered the watcher; "thank Heaven that I had no hand in bringing the colonel here; but it will be useless for me to hope, as nothing but death can part them. I will fight for them both; he shall not tear her away from the man she loves, even though Reckless Rupert lays down his life to prevent it."

Noble Rupert! worthy of any woman's love, even though she be next to an angel. As the colonel drew nearer, Silver Rifle spoke a few words to the little detective, who looked toward the approaching horseman and nodded approval. The colonel drew rein. Though an old friend of Pandy and the rest, he seemed not to notice them now, for his eyes were glued upon the girl.

"Dolly," he said, sternly, and yet with a pathetic ring in his voice, "I have sought you far and near. Will you return to your heartbroken father, or remain with this young scoundrel, who has disgraced the name he bears?"

"Father, you have been unjust toward Lewis. My love for you has never wavered, but still I cling to him so——"

"Choose then between us!" thundered the old colonel, interrupting her; "choose the love and home I would give you, the love that has watched over you since your birth, or the companionship of that boy, whose heart can never hold you as does mine. Choose, I say, and for all time!"

"Hear me, then, father. You have shut the truth out of your heart and refused to let Lewis clear himself. Because he is innocent I cling to him so long as life lasts," she said.

"So be it," muttered the old colonel, almost choking as he turned his steed, "so be it! I will now return to my home. The weight of sorrow will soon lay me beside your mother in the grave."

"Hold!" cried a voice, "I have something to say about this, Colonel Harvey."

"Who are you?" asked the other, severely.

"I am Jean Barthol, Secret Service detective. My business out here has been to secure those money-makers. You knew me well once, Colonel Harvey. I know all about this affair. Yellow Bob here, alias Robert Stackpole, is the guilty man, as can be easily proven. Your son Lewis is as innocent as I. Leave Dolly with her brother, and come with me a few minutes, and I will convince you of this."

Reckless Rupert stood aghast. Siver Rifle her brother! How his heart thrilled with joy, and the blood leaped through his veins. He went up and took each of their hands. Not a word could he say, but Dolly blushed furiously, and the welcome tidings that she loved him was conveyed to the young man's heart. Soon the impulsive colonel came dashing up and, leaping to the ground, threw his arms around Lewis, begging him to forgive and forget, which the noble young man was eager to do. All was joy and peace, but it could not last. Pandy and his fellows rangers held a sort of council, and decided that they had better be moving without any waste of time, for soon Big Buffalo would gather the adjacent tribes, and the country would be too hot for them. They were followed by a large band of furious Blackfeet, but with the aid of the Gatling gun and the shrewd scouts, the Indians were defeated, and they reached the fort in safety.

Reckless Rupert gave up his trapper life, and after marrying the colonel's daughter, settled down to private life, being possessed of means. Pandy and his dear old pard, after seeing Rupert married, and dancing to the affair, started for Leadville, where, of course, new adventures awaited them. Sam Wherrit learned the truth, but preferred to remain with the Indians. Blue Bill and queer old Roaring Ralph Rockwood also turned in the direction of the silver mines, while Lasso Rube and Mexican Mose went south. Silver Rifle resumed his place as a young army officer, and thinks there is no girl in the world equal to his sister Dolly. As to the Indian girl, Singing Swan, he carried her away from the Blackfeet, discovered that she was a white girl adopted into the tribe, found out her parents, and ended by making her his wife. Here, dear reader, we part, to meet again, I hope.

Next week's issue will contain "LIBERTY HOSE; or, THE PRIDE OF PLATTSVILLE."

"Say, what's a common person?" "A common person is one that we do not associate with. Why do you ask?" "Well, the lady next door said you were a common person."

CURRENT NEWS

CARROTS IN ANIMAL'S DEN

A bushel of carrots was found in a den made by a pocket gopher, or a ground squirrel. Ole Larrson, section hand, of Tekoa, Wash., noticed a large mound of new earth near the right of way. A foot and a half down was a circular den, neatly carved out and filled with freshly pulled carrots, tops and all, evidently stored for the winter. Larrson and others of the section gang declare the nearest field from which the carrots could have come was half a mile away.

TREE LIMB BRINGS $5,000.

A single branch of red apples has been sold by Lewis Wood of Ferrell, Gloucester County, N. J., to a big nursery for $5,000. The apples on this branch are of such a superior kind, being better than the fruit from the rest of the tree, that a survey of the orchard has been made by certified engineers and the record and agreement of purchase has been filed with the the County Clerk.

Wood received $1,000 outright for the apple branch and is to get $4,000 additional in installments at the rate of 2 cents each for every tree budded from this branch, which is to remain on the original tree in the orchard. The purchasers are the Stark Brothers' Nurseries of Missouri.

PLAN PALESTINE EXCAVATION

British archaeologists are greatly interested in plans for early excavation of the ancient City of David on Mount Ophel, near Jerusalem. Three attempts have been made in recent years to probe into the secrets of this hill and with some success, but practically the whole of the Jews' original stronghold, the palace and mill of David and probably the tombs of the Kings of Judah will be revealed after archaeologists go thoroughly into the work.

Among the obligations taken by Britain in connection with control of Palestine is that of promoting archaeological research and an area of ten acres has been preserved by the administration for excavation. East of the Jordan, it is said, there is one immense, practically untouched field. Many of these sites are of importance equal to that of Palestine itself. They include ancient Gerasa, where there are wonderful remains of a Roman city, which show that it was one of the most imposing cities of the Roman period.

MONEY GIVEN AWAY

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The Vanishing Of Val Vane

— Or, —

THE TROUBLES OF A BOY MILLIONAIRE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III.

The Woman In Black.

Val and Jack did not carry out their intention of remaining in their old quarters for two weeks, and the papers were the cause of it.

Who started it going Val never learned, but probably it was Mr. Beers, for besides Jack he was the only person Val had yet told of his change of fortune.

That second evening the boys went to a great hotel to dine and returned disgusted.

Val declared that the dinner was "punk." Jack quite agreed with him. As for the formality of it all, that disgusted both.

Perhaps they did not know how to order at such an establishment.

Upon their return home at about nine o'clock they found a wild blockade in front of the lodging house door. No less than a dozen young men were on the steps and a crowd of idlers were watching them.

"What the deuce do you suppose is the matter?" Val asked Jack, who could give him no information, of course.

As they drew nearer, they saw old Mrs. Cassidy, their landlady, appear at the door, and heard her shout:

"If youse don't beat it I'll send for the cops! I tell youse it's all a mistake. Dere's no millionaire livin' in my house. Sure it's some other feller of de same name you're after wanting. G'wan now. G'wan!"

"Heavens!" cried Val. "They're after me. I wonder why?"

"Reporters, of course," laughed Jack. Don't you see that tall fellow had a note-book and pencil, and there's two of them with cameras. You're up against it, old man."

"By gracious, I believe you're right. Let's go right by."

"Nothing doing," said Jack. "See, old Mother Cassidy has pointed you out to them!"

Next moment the boys found themselves surrounded by reporters.

"Which of you is Mr. Vane?" they cried.

"Find out," retorted Jack, trying to force a passage to the stoop.

"I represent the *Moon!*" cried one. "Here's my card. I'm from the *Earth!*" echoed another.

"That's him!" shouted a third, pointing to Jack. Then lights flashed, cameras clicked and a shower of questions came

Jack lost his temper and said things.

"I'm Vane," broke in Val. "Let me tell you, gentlemen, I don't propose to be interviewed. Make way!"

They made way, but they followed and tried to hold him on the stoop.

Val was glad to get inside, but he might as well have allowed himself to be interviewed, for the next morning the interviews were published just the same, some with Jack's portrait and some with Val's, as the boy millionaire.

All kinds of absurd sentiments were put in Val's mouth.

Unused to this sort of thing, he was most indignant, and as the reporters for the afternoon papers began ringing Mrs. Cassidy's bell before breakfast, Val paid her two weeks' rent, sent for a taxi, and he and Jack pulled out with all their belongings and went to the Holland House, where they registered under assumed names, but even this didn't work, for the reporters soon found Val out, and he had to be interviewed in the end.

But this was only the beginning of the troubles of our boy millionaire.

Not only did the New York papers keep it up, but representatives of syndicates and out-of-town papers crowded in on Val as well, all eager to learn what he proposed to do with his wealth, and mingled with this was a lot printed about certain labor troubles at the Cross Creek coal mines, which brought representatives of labor unions and various sorts of reformers and socialistic individuals down upon the poor boy, wanting to know what he proposed to do about matters concerning which he knew next to nothing. It got so at last that Val and Jack could not walk down Fifth avenue without being pestered. Thus it became absolutely necessary for Val to buy a car and engage a chauffeur, which he did.

Nor was this all.

Within a week shoals of letters began to be showered on Val until Jack found his position as private secretary no sinecure.

Some were begging epistles.

Could dear Mr. Vane with all his millions spare a poor widow with 'steen small children a thousand dollars? Some more modest asked only for a hundred. One letter read:

"Say, boss, I'm only a poor tramp. I am dead broke and need shoes and pants. Send me five bones and heaven will bless you forever."

Val and Jack had a good laugh over this letter, and it was one of the few requests for money complied with.

Jack sent the five. Result: as many as forty similar letters followed. Jack declared his belief that they were all instigated by the same man.

Then there were showers of requests for charity on a larger scale, from institutions all over the country even as far south as Texas and as far west as Idaho.

Prospectuses of every sort poured in upon Val. He was asked to invest in mines, patents, pills and machinery, and so on.

Twice the boys changed their hotel, but it was no use. Mr. Eastman would not hear to Val using a false name again.

"You'll have to grin and bear it," he said. "It will let up after a while when these leeches find there's nothing doing."

(To be Continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

PIGEON STOPS UP FLUE

A fluttering homing pigeon nearly caused the death of Charlie Meyers and his entire family at Pottsville, Pa. Mr. Meyers, who is City Assessor and a newspaper publisher, was awakened by his wife, who was suffering from inhalation of gas, which had also affected the members of the family. Investigation showed that the chimney was blocked by a pigeon that had fallen down the flue, its wings being spread upward, blocking the draught. Dr. Earl Stevenson was called and revived the victims.

315,265,000 STAMPS BREAK BUREAU RECORD

The largest single day order of postage stamps in the history of the Postoffice Department was turned out Oct. 30, by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

The number was 315,265,000. The stamps, consisting of all denominations, were shipped to fifteen of the largest postoffices of the country in 1,702 packages, each 14 inches long, 12 inches high and 10 inches wide. It took 568 mail pouches to carry them.

Demand for stamps during October has already exceeded all records, and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is having the greatest difficulty in keeping up with the flood of orders.

JAPANESE TOYS

Christmas toys from Japan being unloaded at Seattle, Wash., are said to include novelties made from tin which has crossed the Pacific many times.

The tin cans originally are used in shipping case oil to China, there refilled with soy bean and other vegetable oils and reshipped back to the United States.

These cans, emptied into tank cars in Puget Sound ports, were then purchased by agents of Japanese toy factories, flattened out, baled and sent back to the Orient as low-rate ballast cargo. Once in the toy shops of Japan the much used tin was quickly made over into very attractive amusing mechanical playthings for boys and girls of America.

Japan while almost self-supporting in all her world-wide commerce, lacks for manufacturing purposes three essentials—wood, iron and tin.

FACTS ABOUT WATCHES

The whims and caprices of a watch are a deep mystery. The many parts of a time piece apparently enter into a conspiracy to the end that the owner may miss trains, ferries and business appointments.

One very common cause of the watch gaining or losing is the disposition made of it at night. If you wear a watch next to your body during the day and place it on a cold surface, as a marble mantelpiece, at night or anywhere in a cold room, the watch is sure either to gain or lose. Cold causes contraction of the metals used in the construction of a watch, and the watch consequently gains.

An expensive watch which has a compensating balance is of course, not affected by changes of temperature. Some metals expand in cold and others contract, and the compensating balance is made of both kinds of metals so that the contraction of one may balance the expansion of the other.

Everybody knows that the proximity of a dynamo will magnetize the steel parts of a watch and ruin it for the time being. A watch may be affected by electricity without the owner having been near a dynamo. The amount of electricity in some people is so great that it affects the steel parts of a watch. Watches slightly magnetized are often brought to the watchmaker, who demagnetizes them. Persons of high electric ormanizations should wear a watch with a steel case if they wish to retain an accurate timepiece.

A watch should never be laid horizontally at night, but should always be hung upon a nail. Change of position will not affect a mechanically perfect watch, but such a watch is yet to be made. Therefore always keep your watch in the same position night and day.

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Life Among The Lions

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

We were two very old friends, Jack Macy and I. My name was Harry Morton. We had been at school together at our home in England, and had run away together from that school. We had a little money, but not much to spare, so we wisely decided to use it sparingly. As we wanted to go abroad, our only chance was to work our passage.

Not at all particular as to our destination, we took the first opportunity afforded us and both shipped on board the good ship Empress Queen, bound for Port Elizabeth, in South Africa. I was the cabin boy, and Jack helped the cook in the galley. Well, you may be sure we had a rough time of it; not that we expected anything else.

After a quick passage we landed in Africa. We then found to our amazement that the captain concluded we had shipped for the voyage out and home. He maintained this, and apparently had the law on his side.

Naturally we didn't run away from England in order to go back again immediately. We therefore took the law into our own hands.

Packing up all our belongings—they weren't many—we left Port Elizabeth and joined a party who were on their way to the diamond fields at Kimberley. There we went into the diamond digging business ourselves. We were fairly successful, and got together a few hundred pounds. Possibly if we had remained at work we might have become rich men. But it was too monotonous, and we longed for a change.

Just at this time people in Africa were in a fever of excitement about a country called Mashonaland, lying far away.

The British South Africa Company had got possession of an immense territory. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that they had appropriated this territory. The next step was to take possession. Imagination pictured it as a land of milk and honey. Gold and precious stones were said to exist in plenty. There were also lions in abundance, and all sorts of wild animals.

To cut my story short, Jack and I determined to call up all we had in the world, and with the proceeds—a part, at any rate—to buy guns and full equipment for a great hunting expedition.

The prospect of mining for gold had a charm for us.

"Harry," said Jack, "no more digging for me—time enough for that when we are older. Now's the time for sport," to which sentiments I cordially agreed.

The company had arranged to dispatch a long train of wagons right up to Mashonaland, and we decided to go with them, if we could fix terms.

This was done without any difficulty, and one fine morning we started with a large number of wagons loaded with stores and mounted escort.

Progress was necessarily slow. After a few days' journey we found ourselves in a new country. Roads had to be made in some fashion before the train could move along. Rivers had to be bridged over. All this took time.

The rivers were literally alive with crocodiles. Woe betide the unfortunate animal that attempted to ford the streams.

Well, after journeying along for about five weeks, Jack and I, in accordance with previous arrangements, left the party when we came to the River Noemyi.

We were to strike into the interior of the country in a small canoe we had brought with us. Nothing was settled about joining the train later, it being understood that we should probably be back in a few months, and would be sure to fall in with some party going either to or from Fort Salisbury.

Just after leaving our friends, a feeling of depression came over us at finding ourselves alone in the vast bush. But this soon wore off. There was a multitude of game of every kind, and the footprints here and there of buffaloes and hippopotami, which we saw on the river's brink, promised us sport of a most exciting nature.

Our baggage was of the very lightest description. Plenty of ammunition and a blanket apiece to wrap ourselves in at night were the principal items. These, with a few other articles, were stowed away in the canoe.

For some hours we paddled along. In places the water was so thickly overgrown it was with difficulty we could proceed. At length it began to get dusk, and we looked about for a convenient place in which to pass the night. This was soon found.

The first thing we did after landing was to light a huge fire.

In the first place it kept off the savage beasts who were prowling about, and secondly its warmth was not to be despised.

Those who have not been in Africa can scarcely realize how delightful it is even in that hot region of the earth to enjoy the warmth of a good fire at night.

Tired out with our exertions, we were soon asleep, our rifles by our sides.

That night, notwithstanding the fatigue, I was very restless, and well for me I was.

I had a feeling of being in a horrible dream, with a gigantic snake creeping toward me. But it was no dream. I was awake and saw a huge monster crawling slowly and gradually along to where we lay.

For an instant I was spellbound. I couldn't move. Then I realized the awfulness of the situation. I seized my gun, raised it to my shoulder, waiting until the snake raised its head, then I discharged the gun full at it.

The shot blew the creature's head off. He gave a few convulsive movements, and was dead.

Jack woke at the noise, which naturally alarmed him. He was even more so when he saw the cause of it. The dead monster was a gigantic python, measuring about eighteen feet in length. I need hardly say there was no more sleep that night. We sat up and talked until the dawn, when we had breakfast. We reckoned after this meal to keep our table supplied with game we shot, what we had brought with us having been eaten.

After breakfast we started off right into the bush. We were well armed, having each a rifle, plenty of ball cartridges, and good hunting knife.

Moving along was difficult. The grass was very long and the ground in many places very swampy. Soon we got in the open country.

We saw huge footprints on the ground. What beast or beasts—for there were many had passed that way—they were we were not certain. Our inexperienced eyes could not detect the difference. Now we should have some sport. We resolved to follow the trail.

We moved along cautiously, till at length we came to a small clump of trees. We had got through to the outer edge, when to our amazement grazing right in front of us were fire huge hippopotami.

They were about a hundred yards away, with their bodies turned toward us. To aim at them would be useless. The bullets would simply drop off their tough hides, and the consequence of disturbing them in this manner might be unpleasant to ourselves. Still ke meant to have a shot at them. How to do so was the question. Jack suggested going right around the belt of trees and getting in front of them. As they were going in that direction they would pass close to us if we concealed ourselves in the bushes. We carried out this plan and lay perfectly still. Then we saw through the bushes, which were not very thick, the herd coming slowly and lazily toward us, the male leading. Jack singled out this one, and I selected another for my victim. They crashed through the bushes just a few yards to our left. As they got exactly opposite at the same moment we both fired. Jack's shot struck the monster right in the ear, and he dropped almost instantly with scarcely a struggle. I heard my bullet hit some part of the brute I aimed at, but it took not the slightest effect. We got ready for a stampede, for we expected an attack, but they all made off as fast as they could, their huge bodies and short legs giving them a ludicrous appearance.

We cut off part of the breast and cooked him over the fire in the evening. But his flesh was as tough as leather.

Next morning, fully armed, we started out into the forest. We were unusually careful now that we expected to see a lion. But the roaring last night showed there were lions in the neighborhood, and that caution was necessary. We shot two wild boars which were the nicest eating of any animals we met with. And these can be found in plenty.

Traveling was difficult. We pushed our way along through the dense wood and the long grass, looking out all the time for game. I was leading a little, but we were walking in a parallel line, Jack, two or three yards away from me, being in the rear.

And at once, to our amazement, we came face to face with a full-grown lion. Immediately I raised my gun to my shoulder. I should think the lion was about twenty yards away. He glared fiercely at us, and lashed the ground with his tail, waving his black mane about angrily. Then he emitted a roar the like of which I never heard. It commenced with a low, rumbling sound, then swelled and ended like a clap of thunder. The earth seemed to shake.

I am usually very cool. And I don't mind admitting that on this occasion some of this quality had deserted me.

I stood with my rifle at my shoulder covering the savage brute. But I seemed unable to pull the trigger.

I was to fire first. This was the arrangement. Jack was to keep his gun for emergency.

And this, though it takes long to describe, only lasted a few moments. If I had fired when I first covered the lion with my gun I should have had a capital chance of striking him in a vital part.

I lost my opportunity. All lions, as is their habit when attacked, crouch down like a cat, exposing only the upper part of their head. As the bushes were rather high not much of him was visible.

The difficulty now was how to get a shot at him. He would not attack until after a shot had been fired. There we stood facing each other. I moved three or four paces to one side. By this means I was able to get a chance of aiming at his temple. If I could hit him between the ear and the eye he would be killed instantly.

I had got round so as to obtain a good view of the lion's head, and was just taking aim. All at once, Jack caught his foot in the undergrowth, which was very thick. He stumbled and fell forward. As he did so his gun, which was cocked, went off with a loud report.

In a moment the lion rose to his full height and jumped toward us. Instantly I fired. My shot hit him and he gave a howl of pain.

Then he crouched down as if about to spring, having his head embedded between his paws. Our position was desperate.

Both guns had been fired, and we appeared at his mercy. Strange to say, at this critical moment, all my nerve and coolness returned to me. I immediately slipped a large hunting-knife over my wrist, and prepared to load my gun without delay, keeping my eyes fixed all the time on the ferocious animal. Jack was lying where he had fallen with the bushes partially concealing him. He had hurt his leg, and it was a fortunate thing for him it was so. If he had arisen he would have been a dead man.

For at this moment the lion made a terrific spring. He miscalculated the distance and passed clear over Jack's body, alighting three or four paces beyond on the other side.

Instantly I wheeled around to face him, and as he turned, taking good aim, I fired. The ball lodged just over his eye, and he fell dead. What a magnificent creature he was, fully eight feet long, with gigantic limbs and muscles.

Then we skinned the monster and took his skin back in triumph to the camp.

After this we had great sport, killing altogether five lions, but, fortunately, we had no more hair-breadth escapes. The sport was quite dangerous enough without.

Then we started on our homeward journey. Our canoe was loaded with our trophies. We had five lions' skins aboard, several leopards' skins, and some tusks of hippopotami.

When we got right down the river to the place where we had left the train of wagons we pitched our camp. About two weeks after a party came along from Fort Salisbury. We joined them on the homeward journey. We were returning well pleased with our hunting expedition.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 22, 1922

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

CHILD'S TINY FINGER KILLS FATHER

The tiny finger of his baby snuffed out the life of Fred Kraus, a 35-year-old farmer, living four miles south of Hudson, Col. Kraus was leaning on the muzzle of a gun and talking to his wife, when his 3-year-old son, playing on the floor, caught at the stock of the shotgun, his finger pulling the trigger.

DRUNKEN FISH

Here's a story for which the State police vouch:

Confiscated liquor valued at $15,000 was poured into the Assawuga River, Conn., with the result that hundreds of fish are suffering what in the old days was known as hangover.

Pickerel and shiny minnows frolicked along side by side. Huge black bass floated down stream on their backs and were easily picked up by hand.

The Wauregen mill race was so choked with a drunken conglomeration of finny creatures that they had to be scooped up by the hundreds before the power machine could function.

HUMAN STILL

Prison authorities investigating the ineffectiveness of the Eighteenth Amendment in the penitentiary, discovered that convicts had invented a "human still."

Gathering weeds growing in the prison yard, the prisoners placed them in buckets of water, according to the investigators, and after the concoction reached the desired degree of fermentation, the inmates swallowed it, following it up with a chaser of water in which sugar and yeast had been dissolved.

The result, the investigators disclosed, was a startling jag that lasted indefinitely. The prison yard weeds have been cut.

TRAPPERS EXPECT BIG HAUL

Predictions are made that the trapping season, which opened Nov. 10, will bring an even larger return than last year, when more than $1,000,000 was realized from the pelts of the fur-bearing animals of the Adirondacks. This is due to market conditions which have resulted in an increase of from 10 to 25 per cent. in the prices of furs and the fact that the number of animals in the woods is unusually large.

One of the largest fur dealers in the State advised the trappers to get busy the moment the law is off. He said he would buy every prime pelt brought to him and would pay better prices than have been paid in a number of years.

The principal fur-bearing animals which can be legally trapped in the woods after Nov. 10 are fox, mink, otter, fisher, skunk, ermine, raccoon and muskrat. It was reported some time ago that the otter were disappearing, but woodsmen declare that such is not the case.

LAUGHS

Mamma—Who is to have the biggest apple? Georgie—Me! Dot—No, me! Georgie was eatin' apples two years 'fore I was born.

"Mary, go into the sitting-room and tell me how the thermometer stands." "It stands on the mantelpiece, just ag'in the wall, sir."

Jack—How is your sister getting on with her singing lessons? Cissie—Well, papa has taken the wadding out of his ears for the first time today.

"I find it impossible to kill the nerve!" claimed the dentist, in a troubled tone. "What can it mean?" "I'm a drummer." with a ring of pride in his tone.

"Two hours of sleep before midnight is better than four after that hour." "Fiddlesticks! Two hours' sleep after one is called in the morning is better than all the others."

"I told her I was afraid to kiss her while we were on the tandem, for fear we would both fall off." "What did he say?" "She said she hoped I didn't call myself an experienced wheelman."

"What are you doing, you young rascal?" said a farmer to a small boy under a tree in his orchard with an apple in his hand. "Please, sir, I was going to put this 'ere apple back on the tree, sir."

Teacher—Do you understand the meaning of the terms capital and labor? Boy—Yes, sir; I know what it is. If a boy coasts down a hill, that's capital. If another boy rides the bicycle up, that's labor."

Mawkins—What's become of Gambit? I have not seen him for some time. Skarem—Oh, he's in the hospital. A case of nervous prostration. He over-exercised, you know. He is a great chess player, you know, and sometimes when he got thoroughly aroused he has been known to make three moves in half a day. No man, you know, could bear up under such killing exercise as that.

GOOD READING

PRAYS WITH GUN AND BIBLE

The Rev. W. E. Smith, itinerant evangelist, opened his services in Latimer County, Okla., the other night by removing a loaded gun from his hip pocket and placing it beside his Bible. After the convocation a second gun was placed on the left of the Scriptures.

The meeting was carried to a normal conclusion without incident, notwithstanding previous threats to the preacher that he would not be permitted to speak.

Mr. Smith told his audience "a certain element" did not wish him to hold his meetings. Shortly after services were under way two automobiles loaded with men attired in the regalia of the Ku Klux Klan arrived.

"PLASTIC WOOD" A NEW PRODUCT

A new product, made by colloidal processes and just put on the English market, is announced by the *Chemical Age*. The interesting thing about this product is that it may be used to repair broken or worn wooden articles. A pattern is made of the article and the plastic wood is filled into the mold and allowed to set hard. This takes but a few hours, and the product obtained is said to be extremely hard and possessed of all the characteristics of wood except that it will not absorb moisture as wood does. The hard plastic wood can be worked with the usual carpenter tools, and nails, screws, etc., can be driven into it without fear of splitting.

A ONE-INCH RAINFALL

An acre of ground contains 43,560 square feet, according to English and American measurement. A rainfall of one inch over one acre would mean the total of 43,560 multiplied by 144, or 6,272,640 cubic inches of water. This is equivalent to 3,630 cubic feet. As a cubic foot of water weighs about 62.4 pounds, the exact amount varying slightly with the density, it follows that the weight of a uniform coating of one inch would be 3,630 multiplied by 62.4, which equals 226,512 pounds, or 113 1-4 short tons. The weight of one gallon of pure water is 8.345, consequently of one inch over one acre of ground would mean 226,143 divided by 8.345, which equals 27,143 gallons of water to the acre. This is equivalent to 603 barrels of forty-five gallons each, and would be sufficient to fill a tank or pool about twenty feet square and nine feet deep.

INSECTS CAUSE MINIATURE RAIN

A "Rainfall" over an area only ten feet square was recently reported in Alexandria, Va. Protesting at the fanciful explanations and the mystery that has been thrown about this phenomenon, Dr. W. J. Humphreys, Professor of Meteorological Physics of the United States Weather Bureau, declares that plant lice produce the supposed "rain."

These insects are found on sycamore and other trees by the thousands. They are little brown mites, three-sixteenths to one-eighth of an inch long, which suck the sap from the leaves and squirt it out of their bodies. This secretion is the liquid that appears to be rain. Dr. Humphreys says there are dozens of trees in Washington that are producing the same kind of "rain."

The liquid produced by plant lice is of a honey dew consistency and stays on the pavement or ground much longer than would the same amount of rain water. It has been suggested that something of this sort made the famous manna of the Israelites in their flight through the wilderness from Egypt.

Rain seldom falls in a ground-wetting shower over an area of less than one square mile, although a few drops may fall over a much smaller area, says Dr. Humphreys.

CHESS TO PAY HIS WAY THROUGH COLLEGE

Three years ago Augustine F. Massa, a lad totally blind, applied for admission to Columbia, but was turned down on the ground that his handicap was so great he could not attain the scholastic standard of the college. Undaunted, he persuaded the authorities to give him a trail in the Department of Extension, and at the end of the first term he had made such a creditable record that the bars were readily lifted for him and Dean Herbert E. Hawkes allowed him to enter as a full-fledged student.

To-day Massa is a student in the Columbia Law College, having received one of the three scholarships in law offered. He also won many other undergraduate honors. He is a member of several student organizations and holds important class offices. He is an expert chess and checker player and a member of the varsity wrestling squad.

In addition to the handicap of blindness, Massa is entirely on his own resources. During the summer he engages in exhibition checker and chess matches, often playing a dozen contestants simultaneously, with smooth boards and checkers and chessmen varying only in color. During his second year he won the Kilore Medal as the intercollegiate heavyweight wrestling champion.

Many have marvelled at the way Massa goes about unaided over the campus and in and out of the buildings. He never uses a cane, once he becomes familiar with a locality. He walks with a sure, unhesitant step. He travels through the subways alone and has never been suriously injured.

Next spring he will get his A. B. degree, and in 1915 he will be graduated with the degree of bachelor of law from the Law College. When asked how he is able to perform these seeming miracles, he said:

"The answer is simply visualization plus memory. Sometimes I imagine I see; I create objects in my mind to correspond to those I know are about me."

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

SIZE OF PEANUT DOUBLED

Children and elephants will be delighted to learn that a farmer along the lower Columbia River has developed a new mammoth peanut with four kernels. The new variety, named the Klickitat peanut, is about twice as large as jumbos. Soil conditions in the section enabled the production of peanuts with three and four nuts and Elias Rankin used these for seed. Careful selection for successive plantings has resulted in the new mammoth peanuts.

MOUNTAIN OF TOOTH POWDER

Nevada for years has been mining silver, copper and gold, but now it has turned to mining tooth powder.

Twelve years ago Mack Foster, an old "desert rat" and big game hunter, discovered Mount Superdent and found its peculiar mineral would take the tobacco stains off his teeth. Other prospectors took to using it, but nobody thought of staking out a claim there. Eventually Foster told a man named Fenwick about the mountain.

Fenwick's secretary, a Western girl named Josephine Robinson, tried some of the material and found it most effective. Fenwick staked the claim in a hurry and now he and his associates are sweating to keep ahead of the orders.

The material mined from the mountain not only cleans teeth, but polishes silver, manicures nails, shines up optical goods, whitens shoes and makes a fine shampoo. Physicians are using it, too, for a surgical powder. Science calls the material "diatomaceus deposits." The mountain is out in the sagebush desert, about thirty miles from Tonopah.

LANSING, MICHIGAN, RUNS TO HOG FARM

Lansing, Michigan, is the first city to maintain and operate successfully a hog farm and has the first municipal hog ranch in the United States. More than 1,500 pigs have been occupants of the municipal hog farm at one time and the "piggery" has returned to the city a profit of more than $1,000 per month besides solving the greatest civic problem—the disposal of the city garbage.

One month the municipal piggery brought to the city funds $5,000 instead of the $1,000, but that was when an extra number of hogs were sold on the Detroit market in July and at the top mark. For twenty-two years previous to this experiment nearby farmers took the garbage and later a Cleveland firm had the contract for disposing of the city garbage, but results were not satisfactory.

To-day the householders of Lansing pay only $1 per year to have their garbage removed two or three times per week, the $1 charge being to provide for the renewal of the galvanized disposal cans.

The piggery is located in Eaton County. There are a number of white houses on this farm where the pigs live. The offensive smells have been kept to a minimum, and with some newer buildings and sewerage in course of construction it is expected these will be eventually eliminated.

To make this plant more effective, a hog hospital is installed and all hogs are given a serum treatment at the age of three months so that today every hog at this plant is immunized against any of the dread hog diseases—especially hog cholera. These healthy municipal fatted hogs are said to be the best on the market, and bring the highest price.

The Contingent Fund of the city is now boosted about $16,000 to $18,000 per year, the residents are saved over $5 each per year and with some 10,000 homes the hog has come into his own at Lansing.

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Anyone ruptured, man, woman or child, should write at once to W. S. Rice, 84-B Main Street, Adams, N. Y., for a free trial of his wonderful stimulating application. Just put it on the rupture and the muscles begin to tighten; they begin to bind together so that the opening closes naturally and the need of a support or truss or appliance is then done away with. Don't neglect to send for this free trial. Even if your rupture doesn't bother you what is the use of wearing supports all your life? Why suffer this nuisance? Why run the risk of gangrene and such dangers from a small and innocent little rupture, the kind that has thrown thousands on the operating table? A host of men and women are daily running such risk just because their ruptures do not hurt nor prevent them from getting around. Write at once for this free trial, as it is certainly a wonderful thing and has aided in the cure of ruptures that were as big as a man's two fists. Try and write at once, using the coupon below.

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This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

Read These Letters From Happy Boys

SHOWS CLEAR PICTURES

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopoid Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

SOLD HIS FOR $10.00 AND ORDERED ANOTHER

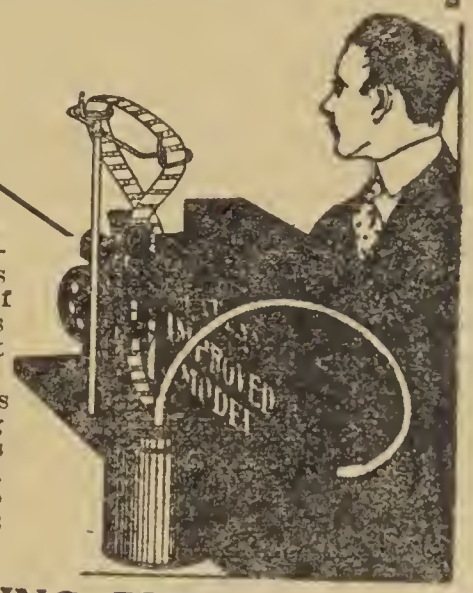
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

WOULD NOT GIVE AWAY FOR $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

BETTER THAN A $12.00 MACHINE

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.



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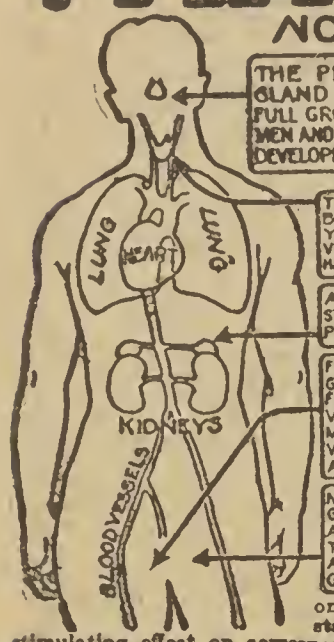
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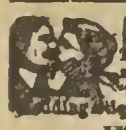

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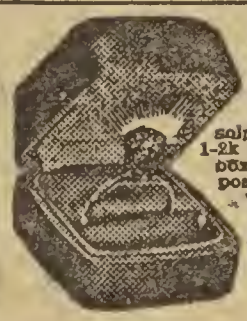

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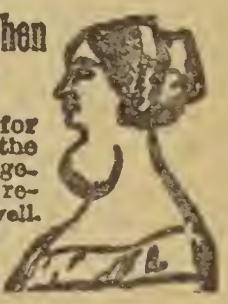

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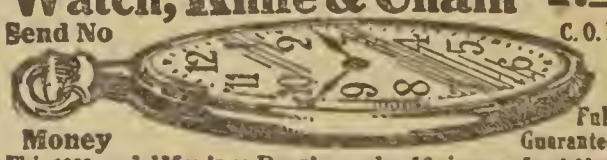

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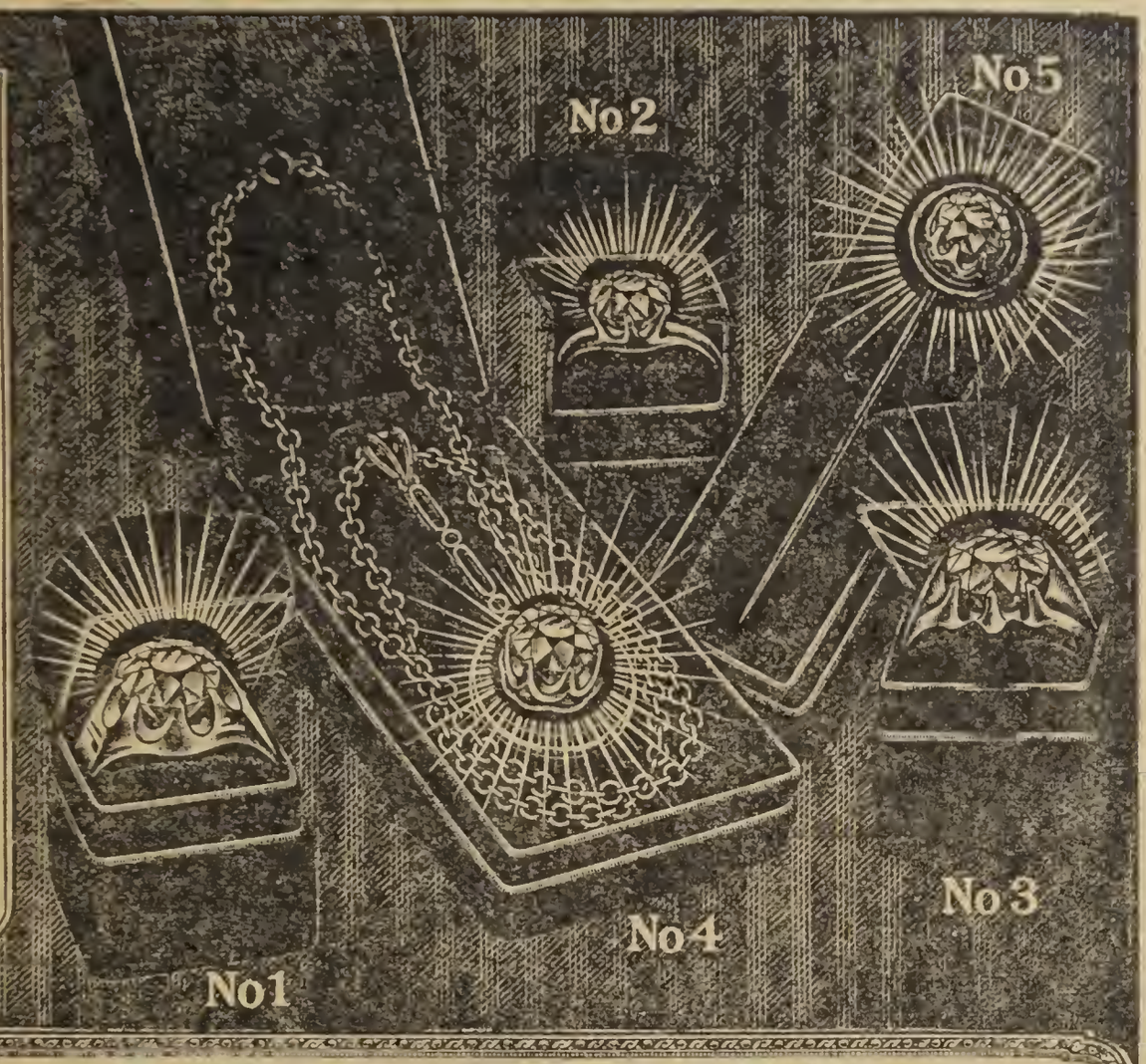

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